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ABSTRACT

These 4 issues of the English Leadership Quarterly comprise volume 17, published during 1995. Articles in number 1 deal with multicultural and multiethnic literature, and are, as follows: "Guidelines for Selecting European Ethnic Literature for Interdisciplinary Courses" (Sandra Stotsky); "Striving for Kinship within Diverse Communities" (Peter Smagorinsky); "Pitfalls in Using Multicultural/Multiethnic Anthologies" (Susan H. Chin); and "Stereotypes Are Stereotypes" (Pamela B. Farrell-Childers). Articles in number 2 deal with technology and the teaching of English language arts, and are, as follows: "Teachers and Technology: A Story about Changes in Literacy" (Janet Beyersdorfer); "A Network Environment and Curriculum Integration" (Rachel L. Pinson); "Writing Instruction with Computers: Developing Student Writers Who Care and Share" (Tim Courtney); and "A Few Recommended Books for Young Adults Interested in Learning about Other Cultures" (Louann Reid). Articles in number 3 are about implementing innovations, and are, as follows: "The Honors Portfolio: One Case of Departmental Innovation" (Bruce Robbins and Driek Zirinsky); "A Classroom of Rote Learners or Critical Thinkers" (Mary Jane Reed); "Developing Leadership: An Innovative Writing Tutor Program" (Roger Ochse); "The Search: One Teacher's Journey" (Jane Pope); and "A Technology Happening Touches the Future" (Susan Smith). Articles in number 4 deal with authentic assessment and are "Classrooms as Communities of Writers" (Nancy L. Hadaway); "Portfolios in the Classroom: Research and Experience" (Thomas W. Jones); "Six Strategies to Promote Assessment and Innovation" (Jane Brady Matanzo); and "Engaging Reluctant Readers through Shared Poetry Experiences" (Marilyn S. Davis and Gerry A. Coffman). (RS)

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ENGLISH LEADERSHIP
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▶ IN THIS ISSUE

Multicultural and Multiethnic Literature

by Henry Kiernan, editor

I grew up in the sixties, in an era when schools, with few exceptions, presented a picture of the world that was relentlessly monocultural and monochromatic. Even though the course was called "world history," it was a study of Western civilization, particularly of the great men of European political history. Rarely did the standard world history class examine the lives of the people of Latin America, Africa, Asia, or the indigenous populations of the Americas.

As a first-generation American, I loved my American literature and history classes, especially the unit on immigration. But rarely did I read literature written by immigrants to learn about their lives, their failures, their successes. What I learned about immigrants came from my own experience, through the stories my parents and grandparents told me.

For many of us, our views of multicultural and multiethnic literature have been formed by childhood memories. But our views have also been informed by adult experiences. For hundreds of American educators, participation in Harvard's summer Institute in Writing, Reading, and Civic Education with Sandra Stotsky has been a transformational process in understanding the complexities of the distinction between the terms *multicultural* and *multiethnic*. This issue of the *Quarterly* is dedicated to continuing the academic discussion and providing a framework that tells the story of how American culture continues to be shaped and transformed by a multicultural and multiethnic population. ●

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Guidelines for Selecting European Ethnic Literature for Interdisciplinary Courses

by Sandra Stotsky, Harvard Graduate School of Education

An increasing number of secondary schools are trying to offer students interdisciplinary courses, particularly for American literature and American history. Such a course gives English teachers the most meaningful context for introducing students to the extraordinarily rich literature on the acculturating experiences of the dozens of European ethnic groups that have been migrating to this country since the 1600s. It is a literature that has generally been ignored in high school literature anthologies and in most American literature classes in the past, and it is one that is still almost completely neglected in current literature anthologies. The purpose of this article is to spell

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out several criteria for teachers and curriculum developers to use in selecting this literature for classroom study in conjunction with a U.S. history course. These criteria address the groups to highlight, the range of themes that can be found in this literature, and how these works might be integrated with the works (now widely available in literature anthologies) by and about members of the four affirmative action categories. I also provide titles and brief annotations for an illustrative number of books or collections of short stories to which students could be directed in their school or public libraries.

Matters of Definition

I consistently refer to the various social groups in this country as *ethnic*, not *cultural*. That is because *ethnic* is probably the most accurate term to use for all the non-indigenous groups in this country, such as Japanese Americans, Italian Americans, Greek Americans, African Americans, Cuban Americans, German Americans, and Mexican Americans. In a major work on ethnicity, Werner Sollors (1986) refers to the "polyethnic character of America" and includes as ethnic both those groups whose members migrated or fled to this country and those groups whose members were brought here as slaves or servants. Unlike their ethnic relatives in their countries of origin, members of these groups are not part of organically distinct cultures in this country because most of their members speak and write English after the second generation (even though some remain bilingual) and participate in our political and popular culture in varying ways. Indeed, members of all groups are increasingly intermarrying with members of other groups in this country, crossing ethnic, religious, and racial lines, although at varying rates. Members of America's ethnic groups differ in most critical respects from people in their countries of origin because they are no longer situated within the geographical and social context that first shaped their or their ancestors' political values and social customs, a context that continues to shape their ethnic kin. Thus, the literature in English about members of these groups qua members of these groups should, for the sake of accuracy, be referred to as American ethnic literature rather than multicultural literature, as it is usually called. This literature should be seen as a prominent part of our national literature.

In recent years, there has been a tendency, at least in high school literature anthologies, to focus chiefly on works by or about the experiences of African Americans, the American Indians, Spanish-speaking immigrants, and immigrants from certain Asian countries, such as Japan, China, Korea, and those in Southeast Asia, in addition to works about a seemingly monolithic "white" America. It is not clear why the editors of these anthologies believe that literary works about the experiences of members of these four affirmative action groups provide a comprehensive portrait of this country's ethnic diversity. They clearly do not, but in light of this tendency it would not be at all surprising if many students come to believe that Spanish-speaking immigrants and immigrants from Asian countries (who constitute about 9% and 3% respectively of our population) have been the primary immigrant groups to this country, and that almost all of the inhabitants of this country encountered by these groups when arriving here were Protestants of English descent. Nevertheless, according to the 1990 census, about 75% of Americans trace their ancestry to Europe and the majority of them are of non-English descent. Thus, works about the experiences of members of the many European ethnic groups who came, and are still coming, to this country deserve much greater attention in our literature courses than they seem to receive now, to judge by the cultural content of the leading literature anthologies for grades 7–11, a variety of recommended multicultural reading lists, articles in professional journals, and presentations at professional conferences, a situation I have discussed in several articles (Stotsky, 1993–94; 1994; 1995; and in press).

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English is an organization dedicated to bringing together English language arts leaders to further their continuing efforts to study and improve the teaching of English language arts. The CEL reaches out to department chairs, teachers, specialists, supervisors, coordinators, and others who are responsible for shaping effective English instruction. The CEL strives to respond to the needs and interests germane to effective English instruction from kindergarten through college, within the local school, the central administration, the state, or the national level.

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The Three Waves of Immigration

Before I suggest possible guidelines for selecting this literature, let me offer this broad overview of immigration—not because English teachers are unaware of these waves, but because I do not think that they have, in general, consciously thought about the usefulness of selecting literary works to accompany the study of American history that illuminate these waves of immigration, the culturally significant groups in each wave, and the different areas of the country they helped to settle or develop. Until the American Revolution and the founding of the American Republic, the Dutch, French Huguenots, Germans, Scots, Welsh, and Scotch-Irish were the major groups who migrated to the British colonies, or became integrated with descendants of the English settlers as a result of territorial changes.

During the first great wave of immigration in the 19th century (from about 1815 to about 1880), the Irish, Germans, and Scandinavians were the major groups to migrate here in large numbers, with much smaller numbers of immigrants coming from China and from Canada (the French Canadians). As is still apparent today, the Germans and Scandinavians tended to settle in both the cities and the farming areas in the Middle West and Northwest, while the Irish, whose labor built the Illinois Central Railroad connecting Chicago and New Orleans and who, along with the Chinese, laid tracks for the Union Pacific Railroad, formed communities all across the country but especially in its biggest cities.

The next great wave of immigration took place from about 1880 to about 1920, with most immigrants coming from eastern and southern Europe, and a much smaller number from Japan and the Hawaiian Islands. The Italians, Jews, and Poles were the largest of the groups in this second wave, and tended to settle in our largest cities in the Northeast and Middle West, thus serving as the labor force for the industrial development of the country (for example, Italian immigrants built the New York City subway system).

The third great wave of immigration has taken place since World War II, and has included large numbers of Spanish-speaking people, from Mexico and Puerto Rico especially, in addition to immigrants from every other part of the world, Asia in particular. These immigrants have settled chiefly in the Southeast and Southwest, although many have migrated to Northern cities as well. Among the European ethnic groups, a large number of Poles, Irish, and Russian Jews have been part of this recent wave of immigration.

Many good pieces of literature exist for every one of the culturally significant European immigrant groups. Thus, English teachers can give their students choices and a good grasp of the development of every section of this country as their groups joined with the descendants of the original English settlers, African Americans, and American Indians who lived off of reservations, in communities all across this country.

Suggested Guidelines

Three broad criteria might be usefully employed by English and history teachers in suggesting specific titles in European ethnic literature to their students. They focus on the groups to be considered, the range of themes reflected in this literature, and how they might be related to works by members of the four affirmative action groups to illuminate similarities and differences. I discuss each of these criteria in turn.

First, teachers should choose works of merit about groups with a visible and significant impact on this country's political, economic, or cultural development. Although America has been the destination of people from almost every country or region on earth, unfortunately there is not enough time in a normal curriculum for students to read about every single one. Thus, those groups that have played a role in this country's development during those historical periods usually conceptualized in American history textbooks should be reflected in their choice. For example, many works deal with the experiences of European ethnic groups around the turn of the 20th century as America became an urban and industrial society. I indicate here the title, author, and original date of publication of some illustrative works, along with a brief description of the work:

Hogan's Goat by William Alfred (1966), a play set in Brooklyn in 1890 about a wild leader caught up in a web of duplicity, adultery, and conspiracy that eventually undermines his marriage and his bid for the mayoralty of Brooklyn.

A Chance to Live by Zoe Beckley (1918), a story of an Irish American girl living on the Lower East Side in New York and her growing awareness of the social issues of her day.

Christ in Concrete by Pietro DiDonato (1939), an autobiographical novel about an Italian construction worker who is fatally injured by a collapsing building one Good Friday.

Rosa, The Life of an Italian Immigrant by Marie Hall Ets (1970), the story of a young wife and mother from Lombardy who emigrated in 1884 to Missouri, where her husband found work in the mines, as written up by a Chicago settlement house worker.

Gold in the Street by Mary Vardoulakis (1945), the story of the migration of Greek peasants from the island of Crete to a Massachusetts mill town.

Second, teachers should expose students to the range of themes that can be found in this ethnic literature. This becomes an increasingly important criterion. There has been a tendency in recent decades to look at the experiences of all immigrant groups as well as of African Americans and the indigenous Indian tribes through the lens of exploitation, discrimination, and prejudice only. In many curricular texts and reference books, racism has been made the central experience for immigrants to this country, beginning with their voyage to this country, continuing with their arrival on our shores, and progressing through several genera-

tions of adjustment and assimilation to life here. Immigrants are portrayed as little more than victims of bigoted Protestants or white Americans. This narrow, one-sided portrait of the immigration experience is as distorted as one portraying immigrants uniformly going from rags to riches and attaining the American Dream within one generation in this country.

Clearly, the themes of exploitation, prejudice, and discrimination can be found in the literature about the immigrant experience. But there are many others that deserve to be highlighted. Let me indicate some of the other themes in this vast literature and suggest some illustrative works for each. For most titles, I have drawn heavily on their annotations in *The Image of Pluralism in American Literature: An Annotated Bibliography on the American Experience of European Ethnic Groups* (Inglehart & Mangione, 1974).

Intergenerational Conflicts and Changes

Asch, Sholem. *East River* (1946): Three generations of Jews are described and their relationships contrasted.

Costakis, Roxane. *Wing and the Thorn* (1952): An immigrant from Greece makes a Greek world for himself in America, but over the years his children rebel against him.

Forgione, Louis. *The River Between* (1928): An account of a prosperous Italian immigrant family, living in an Italian community on the edge of the Hudson Palisades, experiencing conflicts in values and beliefs.

Hagopian, Richard. *The Dove Brings Peace* (1944): Portrays attitudes of the first generation of an Armenian family living in Massachusetts and the bewilderment of the offspring as the two groups come into conflict.

Mangione, Jerre. *Mount Allegro* (1942): A series of recollections of the author's Sicilian childhood in Rochester as his family adjusts to a new land.

O'Connor, Edwin. *The Edge of Sadness* (1961): Depicts world of tight, family-centered second- and third-generation Irish in a decaying parish.

Ostenso, Martha. *O River, Remember* (1943): A story, spanning 1870 to 1941, of two pioneer families, one Irish and one Norwegian, who settle in the Red River Valley of Minnesota.

Petrakis, Harry Mark. *Waves of Night and Other Stories* (1969): Among the subjects dealt with in this collection of short stories on the Greek American experience are father–son conflicts.

Sourian, Peter. *The Gate* (1965): Depicts three generations of an Armenian American family.

Tobenkin, Elias. *The House of Conrad* (1918/1917): Deals with a German—Jewish immigrant family in New York through three generations.

Watson, Virginia. *Manhattan Acres* (1935): A family chronicle about Dutch Americans covering 300 years in the lives of 10 generations of the Van Kampe family, with the growth of Manhattan as significant historic background.

White, Georgia. *Free as the Wind* (1942): A chronicle novel of a family of Hollanders who settle in Michigan during the middle of the 19th century and who are followed through the first year of World War II.

Winther, Sophus. *Take All to Nebraska* (1936): Set in 1898 and the following decade, this is the fast novel in a trilogy depicting a Danish family's experiences on a Nebraska farm as rent farmers and the conflicts between father and sons.

Yezierska, Anzia. *Children of Loneliness: Stories of Immigrant Life in America* (1923): Depicts problems that arise with immigrant parents clinging to the old ways and their children adopting Americanized customs.

Interethnic or Interreligious Contacts or Tensions

Adelson, Ann. *The Little Conquerors* (1960): Story of an Italian American family in a New England town dominated by Irish politicians.

Barrett, William. *Lilies of the Field* (1962): Story of a black ex-GI who builds a chapel for a group of refugee nuns.

Dreiser, Theodore. *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911): The child of religious German immigrants, Jennie is nevertheless attracted to the pleasure-loving son of an enterprising Irishman.

Hagopian, Richard. *Faraway the Spring* (1952): Children of an Armenian immigrant family cross national boundaries in their friendship with children of Italian neighbors.

Malamud, Bernard. *The Tenants* (1972): Novel depicts the confrontation between a Jewish writer living in an abandoned tenement on the East Side of Manhattan and a black writer who also moves into the decaying house.

McHale, Tom. *Principato* (1970): Divergent views about life, death, and the Catholic church are expressed by two immigrant Catholic groups.

McSorley, Edward. *Our Own Kind* (1946): Life in the Irish section of Providence, Rhode Island, in the early 1900s, showing a boy's maturation as he learns about anti-Jewish and anti-Italian sentiments.

Panetta, George. *Kiss Mama* (1965): A two-act comedy in which an Italian mother compromises to make peace with her Jewish daughter-in-law.

Tomasi, Mari. *Like Lesser Gods* (1949): An account of Granitetown, Vermont, its Italian marble cutters, their Scottish wives, and the merging of two cultures and religions.

Intraethnic Class Differences

Curran, Mary Doyle. *Parish and the Hill* (1948): A story of the conflicts arising from the differences between lower-class and middle-class Irish families in a New England mill town.

Oppenheim, James. *Dr. Rast* (1909): A German Jewish physician works among the newly arrived Eastern European Jews on the Lower East Side of New York.

Humor

Auslander, Joseph. *My Uncle Jan* (1948): Set in Wisconsin in the 1890s, a nephew tells the story of Uncle Jan, who made so much money that he sent for all his relatives from Bohemia, and the customs of the Czechs and their attempts at Americanization.

DiDonato, Pietro. *The Love of Annunziata* (1941): A one-act play based on the lives of the characters in *Christ in Concrete,* but done with a light touch.

Housepian, Marjorie. *A Houseful of Love* (1957): A novel about the various members of an Armenian American family of incurable optimists.

Kelly, Myra. *Little Citizens—The Humours of School Life* (1904): Stories about an Irish schoolteacher's attempts to Americanize East Side Jewish immigrant children.

Lessing, Bruno. *Children of Men* (1903): A collection of humorous tales showing immigrant workers surviving amid the inhumanity of the sweatshop and savoring the freedom America offers after the pogroms of the Old World.

Levenson, Sam. *Everything But Money* (1949): Anecdotes about growing up in a poor but tightly knit immigrant family in New York City.

Miniter, Edith. *Our Naputski Neighbors* (1916): A Polish family purchases a farm in West Holly, Massachusetts, and the story is a humorous treatment of the family's acceptance by its neighbors.

Ross, Leonard Q. *The Adventures of Hyman Kaplan* (1937): Humorous sketches about an Americanization class in a New York City night school.

Poverty and Prostitution

Crane, Stephen. *Maggie, a Girl of the Streets* (1896): A story about a poor immigrant family in New York City and of Maggie in particular, who becomes "a girl of the streets."

O'Neill, Eugene. *Anna Christie* (1973): One of his many plays that touch on the Irish American experience, in this one, on the efforts of a prostitute to turn toward a clean life.

Liberation from the Traditional Constraints on Gender Role

Puso, Mario. *The Fortunate Pilgrim* (1965): Conflicts between Italian and American values form the core of this book, as a young Italian woman seeks to move out of a traditional role.

Yezierska, Anzia. *Bread Givers* (1925): A Jewish immigrant girl from a religious family achieves a secular education and establishes herself as a writer.

Third, teachers should try to select works from European ethnic literature that can be compared or contrasted in a revealing way with works by or about members of those groups now classified in the four affirmative action categories. How different are the experiences, for example, of Chinese American or Mexican American women today in comparison with Italian American or Jewish American women who came from traditional homes at the turn of the century? Are there any universals in women's experiences when traditional communities come into sustained contact with an open, secular society that educates boys and girls relatively equally and allows ambitious and intelligent young women to go beyond their traditional role? The female protagonists in Puso's *The Fortunate Pilgrim* and Yezierska's *Bread Givers* offer an informative comparison to Maxine Hong Kingston in *The Woman Warrior* (1976) and Linda Chavez in *Out of the Barrio* (1991). Or as another example, how different are the acculturation problems for the men in Abraham Cahan's *The Imported Bridegroom and Other Stories* (1898); Ludwig Lewisohn's *The Island Within* (1928); and Richard Rodriquez's *The Hunger of Memory;* Dean Brelis's *My New Found Land* (1963), a story about the Greek community of Newport, Rhode Island, during the Depression years; August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson* (1990), a play about a black family in Pittsburgh during the Depression; and Yoshiko Uchida's *Jar of Dreams*, a story about Japanese Americans during the Depression?

> *American ethnic literature should be seen as a prominent part of our national literature.*

All Students Need to Read about the European Ethnic Experience

Why is it important for American students to read works about the varied experiences of European ethnic groups in this country, in addition to works by members of the four affirmative action categories? There are three sets of reasons. Given the near total absence in secondary school literature anthologies of identifiable members of the vast number of European ethnic groups in this country, as well as the almost total absence of selections about the early experiences of these groups here, it would not be at all surprising if students classified in the four affirmative action categories end up with a completely erroneous understanding of American history and who Americans are. These students may end up believing that students who are not members of these four categories—those who supposedly belong to the "mainstream"—are all of Anglo-Saxon stock and are all alike with respect to values, beliefs, and customs. So far as I can tell, only works by or about white Southerners seem to portray distinctive cultural/regional characteristics.

Further, both the students classified in the four affirmative action categories and those considered "mainstream" may easily come to believe that members of groups in the four categories are basically different from other Americans and are quite similar to their ethnic kin in their countries of origin (neither of which is the case after the first generation in this country). Indeed, students may believe that members of groups in the four categories constitute "cultures" that are parallel to a so-called "mainstream" culture rather than constituting ethnic groups that are not distinct cultures at all and whose experiences over several generations parallel those of most European ethnic groups in this country.

Finally, if the experiences of the different European ethnic groups in this country are ignored, and students see the story of prejudice and exploitation in this country's history in racial terms only, they may come to see as reasonable a race-based multicultural curriculum such as the one proposed by James Banks (1992) and adopted by the Board of Directors of the National Council for the Social Studies, in which students are taught according to someone's notion of their race's "learning style" (a concept that seems to echo some utterly discredited 19th-century views of race). Yet race is not coterminous with continent or culture; all Asians do not look like the Chinese, Japanese, or Koreans, "white" peoples come from Asia Minor as well as South America, and each continent contains multiple cultures. A race-based curriculum would only damage all students in so far as it denies the enormous differences within and across individual ethnic groups as well as the far more important influence of socioeconomic class on literacy learning among members of any ethnic group.

Anthologies Containing European Ethnic Literature

Let me close by listing a number of anthologies that contain numerous selections on the experiences of European ethnic groups in this country. Most can be obtained in school or public libraries, and, as can be seen, most date back to the 1970s, before the term *multicultural* became prominent and before it began to mean the exclusion of European ethnic writing. I offer so many older titles because the newer collections of multiethnic works are usually put out under the rubric of *multicultural* and contain extremely few selections by European ethnic groups. For example, Scott, Foresman has just come out with an anthology called *Multicultural Voices* (1995) that it recommends as an elective supplement to its literature anthology series for grades 7–12. Although the four-page yellow brochure describing it states that the anthology "celebrates the immense diversity of American culture" and includes recent works by "Americans of varied cultural backgrounds—African, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, European, and Middle Eastern," this description is highly misleading. Almost all the works are by members of the four affirmative action categories, and there is exactly one work about a European ethnic group: "The Wooing of Ariadne" by Harry Mark Petrakis. It is so remarkably unique that it stands out like a sore thumb in this collection. One wonders if one of the editors was a Greek American and on principle insisted that "the immense diversity of American culture" should include at least one work reflecting his or her ethnic background. On the other hand, the editors of the anthology *Multicultural Perspectives* (1993), published by McDougal, Littell as part of its Responding to Literature series, have made a clean sweep of European ethnic groups—a sort of literary ethnic cleansing—apparently deciding that only members of the four affirmative action categories have retained their "cultural identities" and have "unique heritages" that can strengthen and enrich America (Introduction, p. 4).

The anthologies I list here can serve to counter the extraordinary narrowness in current conceptions of American diversity. They will also help to make students aware of the imbalance that now exists in so many literary compilations. These eight titles are the older ones, and their annotations are drawn from Inglehart and Mangione (1974).

Brooks, Charlotte (ed.). *The Outnumbered* (Dell 1967). Includes material by Willa Cather (on the Bohemians), Stephen V. Benet (on the Irish), Donn Byrne (on the Italians), Bernard Malumud (on the Jews), and William Saroyan (on the Armenians).

Faderman, Lillian, & Bradshaw, Barbara (eds.). *Speaking for Ourselves* (Scott, Foresman 1969). Although only 200-odd pages out of 600 are devoted to the European ethnic experience, it contains a wide range of selections. Ethnic groups included: Italian American, Greek American, Polish American, Armenian American, Jewish American, Irish American, Scandinavian American, and Russian American.

Gross, Theodore L. (ed.). *A Nation of Nations* (Free Press 1971). Includes Mario Puzo, William Saroyan, Jo Pagano, Philip Roth, John Logan, and Ole Rolvaag.

Leinwand, Gerald (ed.). *Minorities All* (Washington Square Press 1971). Designed for urban schools, the focus is on the interaction of old and new immigrants who people the American cities. Includes selected readings about most of the major ethnic groups.

Miller, Wayne (ed.). *A Gathering of Ghetto Writers: Irish, Italian, Jewish, Black, and Puerto Rican* (New York University Press 1972). The introduction offers a critical, historical, and social description of the immigrant experience.

Rose, Peter I. (ed.). *Nation of Nations: The Ethnic Experience and the Racial Crisis* (Random House 1972). An anthology of essays and articles that includes views of ethnic groups by "outsiders" such as James Fenimore Cooper, Henry James, and John Steinbeck, as well as by "insiders" such as Jerre Mangione, James T. Farrell, Piri Thomas, Richard Wright, and Vine Deloria Jr.

Simon, Myron (ed.). *Ethnic Writers in America* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1972). An anthology based on the historical development of ethnic writing.

Wheeler, Thomas C. (ed.). *The Immigrant Experience: The Anguish of Becoming American* (Penguin 1972). Autobiographical memoirs of the ethnic experience include Irish (William Alfred), Italian (Mario Puzo), Norwegian (Eugene Boe), Jewish (Harry Roskolenko), and Polish (Czelaw Milosz).

Two newly published anthologies that I would recommend are both eminently suitable for high school students. One collection of short stories, poems, and excerpts from longer works, entitled *In a New Land: An Anthology of Immigrant Literature* (Grossman & Schur, 1994), is organized in broad thematic categories which are for the most part designed to stimulate students to think about similarities and differences across a range of diverse ethnic groups. Using themes such as "Fresh Off the Boat," "American Dream/American Reality," and "New Words for a New Land," Grossman and Schur offer selections that illuminate both the older and more recent European and Asian immigrant experience, the experience of immigrants from Central or South America, as well as the experiences of black Americans and indigenous Americans. The selections also reflect a wide range of moods, from the humor of George and Helen Waite Papashvily's account of his first day in America, or of Frank Chin's "Donald Duk," to the pains and losses in setting down roots in a new land.

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The other collection of short stories, essays, and excerpts from novels, entitled *Kaleidoscope* (Perkins & Perkins, 1993), is a historically orga-

nized overview of American and ethnic literature. It begins with excerpts from the writings of such explorers as Giovanni da Verrazzano and Samuel de Champlain in the 16th and 17th centuries, includes works by such 19th-century American writers as Harriet Jacobs, Rebecca Harding Davis, and Kate Chopin, as well as by such early 20th-century European immigrants as Abraham Cahan, Mary Antin, and Jerre Mangione, and concludes with selections by a variety of ethnic writers in the late 20th century. It can serve as an excellent companion to chronologically organized American history and literature courses. ●

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Striving for Kinship within Diverse Communities

by Peter Smagorinsky
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The idea of multiculturalism, in society at large and in our schools, seems to have gone beyond the status of buzzword and entered the nation's institutional structure. The country is becoming diverse in unprecedented ways, and providing all citizens with fair opportunities for access to resources has become a concern of administrators of institutions of all kinds. Of course, any effort to reallocate resources creates stress, because many people who already have resources do not want them distributed to someone else. The movement to create broader opportunities for success, then, has created a new set of tensions in our society.

In English language arts classes, "multicultural" issues are represented in both the content and process of the curriculum. The content of the curriculum involves, to a large degree, the selection of literature offered to students; as we all know by now, the content of the literature curriculum traditionally has consisted of works by "dead white males." The effort to reconceive the literature curriculum in light of its exclusive attention to the perspective of European-descendant white males has resulted in the elimination of some standard works (although not as many as some conservative commentators would have you believe) and the inclusion of literature written by men *and* women, by people of diverse ethnicities, races, cultures, nationalities, and faiths. Literature written by white males is typically not included in references to "multicultural" texts, even though white males are not at all a homogeneous group, representing instead an extraordinary array of ethnicities, cultures, regions, nationalities, economic classes, sexual orientations, and faiths.

Attention to cultural differences has affected the process of education as well as its content. Luis Moll and his research associates at the University of Arizona, for instance, have studied the types of learning taking place in Mexican American communities in the Tucson area; they have found that certain processes endemic to learning in the community, such as cooperative decision making, are absent in the assessment of learning in school. Research of this type has resulted in a reconsideration of the ways in which schooling proceeds, because learners who are not enculturated to the learning processes expected in schools are often erroneously treated as though they are cognitively deficient.

Cultural studies such as Moll's, while important, have also on occasion created false stereotypes about specific groups. Carol Lee, for instance, has spoken of her dismay at the way in which many people refer to African American culture as an "oral culture" because some studies have illustrated the rich speech practices among adolescent African American males who perform poorly in school. To Lee, the phrase "oral culture" smacks of condescension and implies that African Americans should not be expected to excel in writing and other literate activities. In cases such as these, one negative stereotype replaces another.

With the move to diversify the content and process of the curriculum, a whole new set of conditions has arisen that represents a challenge to teachers and students. These challenges result in tensions, and these tensions often cause people to

view classrooms in extremes, as either hopelessly politically correct or wonderfully diverse. My own view, both from my experiences in teaching multiracial high school classrooms and in observing the classrooms of others, is somewhere in the middle; I believe that diverse classrooms present a number of *potential* consequences that might differ, depending on the unique configuration of people who come together in each situation. I have tried to identify a set of potential consequences of diversifying the curriculum, both positive and negative; conceivably, all could take place within a single classroom. By reading literature by authors representing both sexes and diverse ethnicities, races, cultures, nationalities, sexual orientation, and faiths, the following could take place.

Positive Consequences

1. Students will be exposed to a plurality of points of view.
2. Students will have the opportunity to see the perspective of and potentially identify with a variety of characters, including characters of different ethnicities, races, cultures, regions, nationalities, and faiths.
3. Students will be exposed to a variety of narrative techniques, which are often associated with the worldviews of the cultures that generate them. For instance, Courtney Cazden describes the way in which the Arapaho believe that life is eternal, and this view is represented in their narrative structure in which stories do not have definite endings but rather often are serial, in the manner of the Arabian Nights tales.
4. Students will be exposed to cultural practices that are different from their own, thus enriching their understanding of other people, and of their own potential for living.
5. Students can get comparative views of how similar characters

Attention to cultural differences has affected the process of education as well as its content.

are treated by different types of authors. For instance, Ann Trousdale has pointed out that, in a limited sample of award-winning stories she studied, white authors created black characters who were heroic because they were compliant, while black authors created black characters who were heroic because they stood up for the rights of their families.

Negative Consequences

1. The content of multinational literature may have no correspondence to the experiences of students, and therefore present problems for student comprehension.
2. The narrative structure of multinational literature may be sufficiently different from the narrative structures endemic to the students' own cultures that it could present comprehension problems.
3. The focus on diversity could encourage each student to take an ethnocentric position that could balkanize the classroom and undermine the sense of kinship among students.
4. Literary selections might be chosen to represent the experiences of a particular group and thus oversimplify the great diversity among the group as a whole. For instance, Richard Wright's *Native Son* may be taken to represent "the black experience," thus reinforcing the stereotype that African Americans are urban, poor, and illiterate, thereby ignoring the great variety of social classes and economic pursuits among African Americans.
5. The literature may be used for didactic purposes such as "correcting" the attitudes of students, thus shifting the emphasis from reading literature to political indoctrination.
6. The literature may stereotype members of a dominant culture in order to suggest the superiority of a different cultural group. A film such as *Dances with Wolves,* for instance, represents the Lakota as peaceful and good, and the whites (except for star and director Kevin Costner and his gone-Native white romantic attraction) as cruel and exploitative.

These lists are undoubtedly incomplete, but they offer a set of plausible consequences of diversifying the curriculum. The setting of the instruction will obviously affect the consequences. Students and teachers in the rural, primarily Native American community of Anadarko, Oklahoma; in a school composed primarily of native minorities and immigrants in urban Chicago; in the socially elite communities of Westchester County, New York; and in other communities around the nation will undoubtedly experience a diverse curriculum in different ways.

One overriding concern I have as an educator is my belief that classrooms should strive to develop a sense of kinship among students, regardless of the differences in their cultures. Confining the curriculum to "dead white males" made this difficult for classrooms composed of students who did not share this singular perspective, and so diversity has been, I believe, necessary for reaching a broader range of students. Yet we must be careful about the potential costs of diversity. Literature that creates racial heroes and villains, or gender-based heroes and villains, undoubtedly serves to divide students rather than bring them together. A curriculum that is oriented to devel-

oping subgroup identity could conceivably factionalize classrooms and pit groups against one another, rather than encourage compassion toward others and understanding of differences. The changes we are seeking are as perilous as they are necessary, and must be handled in such a way as to dignify all students as individuals and help them see their connection to other people, regardless of their differences. ●

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Pitfalls in Using Multicultural/Multiethnic Anthologies

by Susan H. Chin, DeVry Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia

Multicultural/multiethnic anthologies are versatile, informative, and fun to use in high school and college composition classes because they include a diverse sampling of themes, topics, and issues in a multitude of forms: autobiographies, diaries, essays, interviews, journalistic articles, memoirs, photographic essays, plays, poetry, speeches, and short stories.

To the average Western reader, the authors in these anthologies may be well-known, lesser-known, or unknown; however, the majority of the writers are native to the country or culture about which they are writing. These authentic voices represent a broad spectrum of geographic regions, nations, races, ethnic groups, linguistic and cultural communities, professions, socioeconomic classes, and religions.

With this combination of factors, multicultural/multiethnic anthologies create an exciting reading experience, one which can engage readers in critical thinking about their world, themselves, and others. However, the primary benefit derived from using this special class of anthologies is not automatic. A number of major pitfalls must be overcome by the readers.

Pitfalls

In multicultural/multiethnic anthologies, students will read about many areas of the world for which they have no prior knowledge or about cultures with which they have had no interaction. Some of these readings may create stereotypes in the minds of readers; selections about India are a case in point. Krishnan Varma's "The Grass-Eaters" describes human degradation and suffering in Calcutta; in "Giribala" Mahasweta Devi narrates a tale of a Bengali woman whose husband sells their young daughters into prostitution; and Jo McGowan sends a strong message in her essay, "In India, They Abort Females." Unfortunately, these selections paint a negative and one-sided portrayal of life in India. And unless educators are knowledgeable about India and its people, they are not in a position to dispel the misperceptions generated by these selections. Regrettably, in my review of multicultural/multiethnic anthologies on the market, I found no selections that describe the virtues of India, and as Jack Shaheen points out in "The Media's Image of Arabs," negative images are responsible for creating negative stereotypes.

Another pitfall is that assumptions, prejudices, and stereotypes interfere with perception. In Maya Angelou's "Graduation," guest speaker Edward Donleavy proves this point quite clearly. Donleavy, a white official speaking at a commencement ceremony at a black elementary school in Stamps, Arkansas, proudly announces that the white high school will soon receive new microscopes and up-to-date lab equipment and that the black school will have new home economics and workshop equipment. In other words, Donleavy does not perceive African American children as future scientists, inventors, or artists, but as unskilled or semi-skilled laborers. Certainly if assumptions, prejudices, and stereotypes interfere with

perception, then assumptions, prejudices, and stereotypes also interfere with reading comprehension.

Not only is there this type of interference, but each of us perceives, evaluates, and judges other cultures through the filter of our own culture. Nowhere is this judgment more evident than in respect to food, one of the most visible components of culture. Consider your reactions to being served any of the following: buffalo, squid, jellyfish, iguana, grasshopper, or dog—each of which is a food item in one or more of the cultures of the world. Cultural filtering, which is synonymous with cultural conditioning, not only affects our gastronomic choices but also affects how we *react* to what others eat. Negative reaction to what others eat is a reflection of our cultural insensitivity.

Evaluating and judging other cultures through the filter of our own culture is a major stumbling block to comprehending the values, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs of other cultures, and it is these values, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs, invisible to the eye, that constitute the greater part of culture. Ideologically, the caste system in India and apartheid in South Africa are anathema to the American tenet of equality and equal rights. Pragmatically, in Shirley Saad's "Amina," Western readers may sympathize with the young mother who has given birth to her fourth daughter, but the Western paradigm does not include the disgrace this Lebanese woman feels for having produced yet another female child or her fear that her husband will take a second wife so that he can have a son. The living conditions of Varma's protagonist in "The Grass-Eaters," an educated man who lives in a pipe and eats twice-daily meals of grass boiled with green peppers and a rice gruel, offend Western concepts of survival. More important, Western readers cannot fully grasp the significance of this destitute family's having a son to perform funeral rites for the parents when they die, a practice of paramount importance in the East.

When a story is removed from its cultural context, it becomes just another story rather than a reflection of cultural thought and philosophy.

When students read about other cultures and discover similarities and differences between other cultures and their own, they gain an understanding of their own culture. However, when readers divide the world into "them" and "us," they are expressing their ethnocentricity; it becomes harmful, and even dangerous, when they believe that "us" is superior. While multicultural/multiethnic anthologies play a distinct role in developing cultural competency, the major pitfalls of stereotypes, interferences with perception, cultural filters, and ethnocentricity can detract from the primary benefit of using most of these anthologies.

Overcoming Pitfalls

Our challenge is to move forward—to move beyond ethnocentricity, beyond prejudice, predilection, and tolerance, beyond token acceptance of those who are culturally different from ourselves. Our objectives should be twofold: (1) recognition and understanding that while cultures are different, all cultures are equal and no *one* culture is better than any other culture; and (2) promotion of mutual respect.

The first step in moving forward is combating stereotypes. We can take class time to examine the general nature of stereotypes and their causes and effects, or dissect specific stereotypes—how they originated and why they persist. Our goal should *not* be replacing negative stereotypes with positive ones; rather, our goal should be eliminating stereotypes and helping students to accept people as individuals, individuals who exist within a cultural framework.

Another step is using factual information to dispel myths and misperceptions. A good source for information is *Culturgrams*, which provides summaries of a country's history and economy as well as brief notes on customs and courtesies, population and language groups, and lifestyles within the country.

Ideally, a series of culturally connected reading selections serves to create a cultural framework for improved comprehension of each selection and of the culture itself. By their very nature, however, anthologies usually contain only one or two selections about a particular culture. Reading only a selection or two about a culture can result in a reader taking the selection out of cultural context, much as an eavesdropper can take a phrase or sentence out of context. When a story is removed from its cultural context, it becomes just another story rather than a reflection of cultural thought and philosophy.

Establishing a cultural framework is possible through a combination of reading selection(s) and resources such as films, videos, photographs and photographic essays, cultural studies, magazine and newspaper articles, festivities sponsored by cultural and ethnic groups, and guest speakers. Sources for guest speakers include international clubs, ethnic business and professional associations, and ethnic community associations and churches. It is important, however, to recognize that the perspective of speakers varies, depending on whether they are first-, second-, or third-generation immigrants.

The first generation identifies itself in terms of cultural heritage, such as Italian or Vietnamese. Many immigrants and refugees gravitate toward ethnic enclaves (Little Italy or Little Vietnam) because they seek the comfort of those who speak the same language and share the same

lifestyle. However, their offspring who have become acculturated cross the borders of these ethnic communities to integrate into mainstream America. Those second-generation individuals who leave do return, in varying degrees, for holidays, celebrations, and shopping excursions for ethnic spices and foodstuffs; they think of themselves as Italian Americans or Vietnamese Americans. The assimilation of the third generation into American culture may be so thorough that they may even lack the language to communicate with their grandparents; surnames or physical characteristics are the primary markers of ethnicity. Those who are third generation think of themselves as Americans first and Italian Americans or Vietnamese Americans second.

Linking a reading selection to its cultural framework is vital because when we neglect to make that connection and, more important, when we fail to respect and value the other culture, we fail to move beyond cultural competency and we fail to foster development of intercultural awareness and sensitivity. We fail to build bridges of intercultural understanding. The development of heightened intercultural consciousness is what should be—but all too often is not—the primary benefit of using multicultural/multiethnic anthologies. ●

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New NCTE Position

NCTE is seeking a distinguished scholar–teacher to fill the newly created position of Associate Executive Director for Higher Education, reporting to the NCTE Executive Director. The AED should be a strong advocate for NCTE and college English studies, helping to shape Council policy on conditions for working and learning at the college level, to promote good college English teaching, and to foster connections among research, theory, and teaching.

Application deadline is April 10, 1995. For a complete description of the position, call or write Kathy Parham, NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096; phone (217) 328-3870, ext. 295; e-mail <kparham@prairienet.org>. NCTE is an Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action Employer. Persons of color are encouraged to apply. ●

Stereotypes Are Stereotypes

by Pamela B. Farrell-Childers, The McCallie School, Chattanooga, Tennessee

After 25 years of teaching in coeducational public schools, I have learned the difference between boys and girls, understood the social interaction that occurs in classrooms when hormones (not pens) are mightier than swords, and handled every possible male–female altercation known to public schools. But what did I know about teaching in an all-boys' independent school with a predominantly male faculty? I had taught an all-male, weapon-toting senior English class once, and worked with all-male administration, but this would be different. Actually, I discovered that the only difference is that assumed stereotypes lack challenge without the female voice. But is it the female voice or merely the voice of opposition to faulty assumptions? In less than six months, I discovered that stereotypes are stereotypes, no matter where you are. We all need to have our ideas challenged to stimulate thinking.

Three years ago while on sabbatical from a public high school in the Northeast, I consulted at a prestigious all-male boys' preparatory school in the South to develop a writing across the curriculum program and to design a writing center. I visited approximately 30 classes during my first three-week visit to get a sense of the academic and social atmosphere in a male environment with boarding and day students. As part of my first visit to the school, I offered to teach writing classes or to team-teach classes in all subject areas. In response to my request, I

worked with geometry, history, science, public speaking, and English teachers in their classrooms. In all of these classes, students were students, boys were boys. Although only one teacher was female, teachers did not make any sexist distinctions in their teaching except when it came to use of metaphor; all examples dealt with sports, cars, and other examples generally associated with male experiences. The pattern was normal. As Peggy McIntosh (1981) describes it, "The traditional curriculum was designed for the education of white male Western leaders in a time of Western dominance and economic expansion" (p. 3). I wanted to challenge it.

But how could I test it at an all-male school? Aha, I thought, the school had an afternoon coordinate program with a nearby girls' preparatory school. Students were shuttled between campuses to take courses that were only offered on the other campus. For instance, a semester course specializing in Civil War history was only offered on the campus of the boys' school, while German was only taught at the girls' school. At this point, I decided to test some of my ideas about stereotypes on both males and females. Over lunch one day, I discovered that one of the female counselors at the boys' school taught a course called "gender issues" in the coordinate program. I approached her with my idea to present multicultural poetry to the class, with the intent of presenting universalities of relationships and rituals through individual works that would enrich our understanding of these larger concepts. I wanted to offer a revised curriculum that "would give both our male students (now a minority) and our women a better preparation for a world in which non-Western women of color are the world majority" (McIntosh). At the time, I had not intended to do what I actually did.

Once I had set the stage to present some contemporary poems by writers of diverse cultural backgrounds, I suddenly recalled an exercise I had done in New Zealand at the International Federation for the Teaching of English conference. Would the same sexist stereotypes rear their ugly heads if I kept the sex of the poet a secret from the reader? With a good group of poems I liked and scissors in hand, I proceeded with my plan by cutting and pasting poems on pages with the names of the poets omitted. I used works from the resource materials prepared for the PBS series *Moyers: The Power of the Word* (1989). I photocopied pages of the poems with cover sheets giving the names of the poets and a quotation from each about poetry. This way students would have names to put with the poems after the class ended. I was ready for my experiment, and the teacher was ready to "have a go at poetry."

I began the class by reading "Christmas Eve: My Mother Dressing" (1989) by poet-friend Toi Derricotte to establish the idea of relationships. The poem was intentionally omitted from the students' packets to prepare them to listen to a poem and to model its reading. We discussed the levels of relationships between the poet and her mother at various points in the poem. We also looked for any indication of cultural heritage that students found in the lines "[hands] whiter on the inside than they should have been" (16) and "not the slave of the house, the woman" (26). The student-centered responses by both male and female students reflected the open atmosphere that had been created by the teacher. We were prepared to move to the packets.

I continued the universal concept of family relationships with "I Go Back to May 1937" (1987), Sharon Olds's moving poem about her parents. I asked for a volunteer to read the poem, knowing that I would pick a male reader since the students did not know the sex of the poet. The young man read the poem twice, the second time with more cadence. The class was silent for a moment. I asked them to reread the poem themselves and consider whether the poet was male or female. As the students looked up again, I asked for a vote and all (including the teacher) but one believed the poet to be male. I asked why and the responses reflected stereotypes related to poetry and sex. They said such things as:

"The mother and father are treated equally and a woman would have shown more sympathy towards the mother who was mistreated by the father."

"A female poet wouldn't use similes like 'red tiles glinting like bent/plates of blood behind his head' or 'bang them together like chips of flint.'"

"The ending is so matter-of-fact without the emotional stuff a woman would put in."

"Would a woman call her parents 'dumb'?"

I then asked them if the sex of the poet made a difference. They unanimously said, "No." The tension of revelation filled the air. I wanted to slip quietly from the room, leaving them to contemplate more without interruption, but they looked up to see what was next.

I introduced the next poem slowly, telling them that this poem was more of a reminiscence of a relationship with a parent. After we discussed what the title meant and we talked about some mnemonic devices students had used, we turned to Li-Young Lee's "Mnemonic" (1986). Again, the students did not know the identity or sex of the poet. One of the girls graciously volunteered to read the poem twice. Hands immediately raised at the end of the reading to offer opinions as to the sex of the poet. One boy said, "I can see the father taking his sweater off to wrap around his daughter. He's being a protective, loving father." Another interjected, "Yes, the details of the sweater paint a gently female image to me." I referred to the third stanza, describing the father and the comparison between the father and child. They saw the father on a pedestal before the daughter, even though he

was portrayed as a strict disciplinarian. The feeling conveyed was that the daughter deserved to be punished because she couldn't live up to her father's standards. I asked the students then to turn to the cover of the packets, where Li-Young Lee describes his poetry as a "dialogue, a quarrel with my father." They returned to the poem

I merely challenged some assumptions that all of us tend to have. Stereotypes are stereotypes, unless they are questioned.

once more, and lights began to go on around the room. "Oh," one student said, "he is trying to remember all the things he was taught by his father, and they get confused with the memories of his father." Another referred to the difference in the kinds of memories of father and son; one, organized, the other, "a heap/ of details, uncatalogued, illogical" (16–17). "Exactly," I said. Did the sex of the poet make a difference here? The class questioned my question: "Doesn't his cultural background make a difference, too?" Now we were getting somewhere by challenging stereotypes!

Time was getting short, and I wanted to challenge them with one more poem about relationships before we moved to rituals. We looked at Stanley Kunitz's "The Portrait" (1978). A young lady volunteered to read the poem but first asked, "Will you tell me something about the poet first?" I explained that I did not want to distract from the impact of the words in this poem, so we would discuss that information to fill in missing blanks after her reading. She understood my explanation after her first reading, then gave a slower reading the second time. "Wow, the poet kept this experience inside for 64 years. Tell us more about the poet." I explained that Stanley Kunitz was still writing poetry at the young age of 85. They began talking about the impact of parents' actions on children for entire lifetimes. I let them go on referring to particular lines of the poem. They said a man or woman could have written this, but they particularly liked the personification in "She locked his name/in her deepest cabinet/and would not let him out/though I could hear him thumping" (7–10). One boy said, "There isn't a single unnecessary word in this poem. I like that." It was going to be difficult to change gears now! The tension needed some comic relief, so I made the transition to rituals.

"How many of you have rituals in your families?" No one responded. "What do you do on Thanksgiving?" I asked. All volunteered a variety of responses including the details of their meals, which varied. We then discussed other rituals, such as studying, family vacations, getting ready for dates, and occurrences that happen daily or at certain times of the year. I asked again, "How many of you have rituals in your families?" All responded, so we moved to "Good Grease" (1981) by Mary Tall-Mountain. A young man read it twice and said, "I never thought of grease as something good." A girl added, "I wouldn't normally associate 'clucked, sucking, and smacking' with grease." They didn't care whether the poet was male or female, but instead were more interested in where the village was and whether the people were American Indians, Eskimos, or another ethnic group. The poem had stimulated more interest in the ritual than in sexual stereotypes. One student commented, "I like this poem because it is a fond memory like Li-Young Lee's poem about his father." Fortunately, the students had successfully made the transition from the emotional sadness of "The Portrait" to the fond memory of a ritual in an American Indian village in Alaska.

We quickly moved to "Blackberry Eating" (1982) by Galway Kinnell. The girl who read this poem twice was drooling with the rest of us when she finished. A few students recounted stories of picking wild berries. I mentioned that I always seemed to eat more berries than I placed in the basket to take home. They agreed. One noticed the changing use of *black* within the poem and the wonderful way Kinnell allowed us to taste the berries with him by using "s" sounds so much with words like "squinched" and "splurge." Everyone was hungry now for more, and all agreed that the poem stood on its own merit without any need for knowledge of the poet or his sex.

With five minutes left, I went through the pages of the packets and gave students the name of the poet that corresponded to each poem. I asked them to continue the discussion we had started and to consider why and when the sex or cultural background of the poet was an integral part of the poem. They were eager to look at more poems. One boy offered, "I learned that I can't judge whether I like a poem by the poet or the sex of the poet. Now I'll try reading more poems and decide for myself whether I like them or not. If I need to know more about the poet, I'll find out what I need to know." After class the boy who read "I Go Back to May 1937" told me how much he loved that poem and couldn't wait to share it with his girlfriend. The teacher said, "I never really liked poetry, but I love these poems."

Did I do anything unique? I don't think so; I merely challenged some assumptions that all of us tend to have. Hopefully, I stimulated some interest in poetry and also encouraged the students to question gender and cultural assumptions for themselves. What did I learn? I learned that we need "educators who can teach students to be competent in the mainstream culture and appreciative of cultural diversity, including gender differences" (Vandell, 1990, p. 5). Stereotypes

are stereotypes, unless they are questioned, and I plan to continue challenging my own and those of others. ●

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Conference Will Explore Spirituality in Education

"Feeding the Mind, Nurturing the Spirit," a conference/symposium for K–college educators interested in topics such as holistic learning and spirituality in education, will be held August 11–14, 1995, at Snow Mountain Ranch, Colorado. James Moffett, whose most recent book is *The Universal Schoolhouse: Spiritual Awakening through Education,* will be the main presenter.

The conference, sponsored by NCTE's Assembly on Expanded Perspectives in Learning (AEPL), will include small-group discussions, interactive teaching demonstrations, and participatory sessions involving meditation, guided imagery, body wisdom, the role of feelings and emotions in teaching and learning, and other topics.

Total cost of the conference per person is $329 (multiple occupancy), $399 (double occupancy), or $499 (single occupancy). Fee includes registration, lodging, and meals for the event. For a registration form and further information, contact Dick Graves, Curriculum and Teaching, Auburn University, Auburn, AL 36849; phone (205)844-6889.

Call for Manuscripts: Alternatives to Grading Student Writing

The NCTE Committee on Alternatives to Grading Student Writing invites manuscripts discussing effects of grading on students and their writing; the social and political significance of grading student writing; the theoretical and research foundations for (not) grading student papers; practical alternatives to paper-grading in K–college classrooms; and strategies for informing students, parents, other teachers, administrators, and the public about alternatives to grading student writing.

Deadline for receipt of manuscripts is August 31, 1995. For a detailed prospectus and style sheet, contact Lynda Radican, Associate Chair, Grading Alternatives Committee, 1806 Fifth Street, Lincoln, CA 95648.

Winners Named for "Best Article"

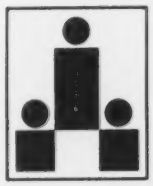
Donald A. McAndrew and C. Mark Hurlbert were honored at the CEL meeting in Orlando this past November as the latest recipients of the Conference on English Leadership's "Best Article" award for items published in the *English Leadership Quarterly* during 1993. James Strickland, former editor of the *Quarterly,* presented the authors with a plaque during the Friday CEL Luncheon.

The award honors the author of the best article, so chosen because of its value to the department chair, the quality of its writing, and the originality of what it said. McAndrew and Hurlbert, teachers in the English department at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, tackled the political issue of standard edited English. In "Teaching Intentional Errors in Standard English: A Way to 'big smart english'," published in the May 1993 *Quarterly,* they wrote, "Writers should be encouraged to make intentional errors in standard form and usage. Attacking the demand for standard English is the only way to end its oppression of linguistic minorities and learning writers. We believe this frontal assault is necessary for two reasons: (1) it affords experienced writers, who can choose or not choose to write standard English, a chance to publicly demonstrate against its tyranny, and (2) if enough writers do it regularly, our culture's view of what is standard and acceptable may widen just enough to include a more diverse surface representation of language, creating a more equitable distribution not only of the power in language and literacy but also, ultimately, of the power in economics and politics that language and literacy allow."

Honorable mention went to finalists for the award: **M. P. Cavanaugh,** "Integrated Teaching: A Common Ground among Literature, Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies"; **Robert Perrin,** "Parent/Teacher Conferences: Avoiding the Collision Course"; and **Terrie St. Michel,** "*Macbeth* and Sense of Self."

The judging committee included Diana Dreyer of Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania; Henry Kiernan of West Morris Regional High School, New Jersey, current editor of the *Quarterly*; Bill Newby of Shaker Heights High School, Ohio; and Louann Reid of Colorado State University. ●

Call for Program Proposals



Leadership for Life-Long Learning

1995 CEL Conference, San Diego
Monday, November 20–Wednesday, November 22, 1995

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Presentation Title _____

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Will you need an overhead projector? ❑ Yes ❑ No
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2. Names of Other Presenters. Attach an additional sheet with complete mailing information if others are presenting with you.

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❑ Monday, November 20, 1995 ❑ Tuesday, November 21, 1995 ❑ Wednesday, November 22, 1995

4. Session Type. ❑ Individual ❑ Panel ❑ Debate ❑ Round Table

5. Session Description. Attach a concise description of your session, including objectives and possible outcomes. Also include a one-line synopsis that may be used in the Program to describe the presentation.

Send the completed Program Proposal to:

Wanda Porter
Kamehameha Secondary School
210 Konia Circle
Honolulu, HI 96819-1599

No proposal will be accepted by phone, but if you have questions, you may contact Wanda Porter at school, (808)842-8230, or at home, (808)261-4343.

Proposals must be postmarked no later than March 15, 1995.

Call for Manuscripts—Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly,* a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500–5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

Recent surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

October 1995 (July 1 deadline)
Implementing Innovations

December 1995 (September 1 deadline)
Authentic Assessment

February 1996 (October 15 deadline)
Blueprints for Integrating the English Curriculum

Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Henry Kiernan, Editor, *English Leadership Quarterly,* West Morris Regional High School District, Administration Building, Four Bridges Road, Chester, NJ 07930 (phone 908-879-6404, ext. 278; fax 908-879-8861); e-mail <kiernan@planet.net>. ●

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▶ IN THIS ISSUE

Technology and the Teaching of English Language Arts

by Henry Kiernan, editor

A colleague recently reminded me that it took 20 years to get the overhead projector out of the bowling alley and into the classroom. Until teachers are provided with the resources and training to apply technology to the teaching/learning process, there should be no rush to build technologically supported classrooms. The bottom line is that technology is broader than computers, and that technology tools need to become a seamless part of both staff and curriculum development.

Like many school systems, my own West Morris Regional is in the middle of creating an infrastructure, offering a communications network as a backbone designed to accommodate voice, data, and video. Teachers and students can then tap into vast information resources, expanding the district's curriculum and supporting a full range of learning activities designed to increase students' problem-solving abilities, creativity, and critical judgment. Yet, we also know that instruction needs to drive technology, not the reverse.

This issue is dedicated to all our CEL cyberspace colleagues, ranging from the snail-mail computer phobic to those who regularly surf the Net and now prefer to e-mail comments to the editor. Judging from the experiences of Janet Beyersdorfer, Rachel Pinson, and Tim Courtney, the vision for connecting the tools of technology with the teaching of English remains firmly in the hands of creative, dynamic teachers. ●

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Teachers and Technology: A Story about Changes in Literacy

by Janet Beyersdorfer, Community Consolidated School District 21, Wheeling, Illinois

The partnership between literacy and technology has an impressive history. The written word may be considered a technological advancement over the spoken word (Reinking & Bridwell-Bowles, 1991), and the introduction of textbooks might be regarded as a technological improvement upon teaching practices that relied on the recitation, memorization, and reproduction of texts. During the past few decades, teachers have used other technologies such as the overhead projector, tape recorder, and VCR to make learning more inviting and attainable. Certainly, the ending to the story of teachers and technological change has not been written. For educators interested in using technology to

support literacy, the story is still a first draft.

Technology use by teachers, therefore, is not a revolutionary trend; it is a rapidly accelerating evolutionary process. The Information Age of data collection and storage may be giving way to what David Thornburg (Betts, 1994) calls the Communication Age, during which people think critically about data in order to solve a problem. Concurrently, reading researchers are assessing the impact of technology on literacy. They are examining the literary formats available in electronic environments, reconceptualizing the reading and writing processes, determining the professional development needs of novice and experienced teachers, and designing instructional methodology and materials.

Predictions about the need for different and greater literacy skills may sound suspiciously like the plot of a science fiction story. Actually, discussions about literacy and technology tell a fascinating story about how the educational community participates in social change.

Stories weave together settings, symbols, and events in which characters encounter, adapt to, and explain change. The way in which teachers confront the challenge of technological change follows that well-known plot outline: the setting and characters are introduced (classroom teachers); the conflicts are presented (human vs. human, human vs. machine, human vs. self); the characters' attempts to solve the problem are detailed (philosophical, instructional); a turning point, the climax, is reached (alliance with technology); the adaptations to the change are summarized (methodological); until finally, the resolution is described (integration of technological resources and curriculum).

Establishing the Setting

Teachers and students participate in academic, social, political, and economic events through networked computer labs, small clusters of computers, and single-computer workstations. Unfortunately, there are many inequities with the distribution of technological resources, and even schools with a considerable economic investment in technology do not provide each student with a computer. Providing sufficient access to technology is in part a question of quantity. How many computers are needed to provide sufficient opportunity for students to develop an appropriate level of literacy? How sophisticated must the technology be? What is an appropriate level of literacy for the students? Papert (1993) describes a scenario where a million computers were divided among 50 million students, thus giving each child one-fiftieth of a computer. He speculated about whether people would be surprised to observe that "where only one writing instrument could be provided for every 50 students . . . that writing does not significantly help learning" (pp. 37–38). Furthermore, race, social class, language background, and sex (Gomez, 1991) are factors when considering if, when, and how students are taught composition using computers. The issue of access, though, is broader than the quantitative perspective alone.

Access is only the first step to achieving literacy using technology, comparable to the knowledge comprehension step in Bloom's Taxonomy (Stephenson, 1994); proficient learners must think critically about the data and initiate action based upon their conclusions.

Introducing the Characters

Interestingly, many of the teacher–heroes and teacher–heroines who are integrating technology into existing curricula have considerable teaching experience. In one study (Shiengold & Hadley, 1990), 608 K–12 teachers were identified as accomplished computer-using teachers and were asked about how they had integrated computers into classroom practice. These teachers used word processing, instructional software, and analytic/information tools (databases, spreadsheets). More than half of the teachers surveyed were between 40 and 49 years old, and three-quarters had been teaching for 13 years or more. This evidence dispels the myth that only novice teachers integrate instruction and technology.

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English is an organization dedicated to bringing together English language arts leaders to further their continuing efforts to study and improve the teaching of English language arts. The CEL reaches out to department chairs, teachers, specialists, supervisors, coordinators, and others who are responsible for shaping effective English instruction. The CEL strives to respond to the needs and interests germane to effective English instruction from kindergarten through college, within the local school, the central administration, the state, or the national level.

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy where such endorsement is clearly specified.

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Describing the Conflicts

Any change process reveals a conflict between existing patterns of belief and behavior and those patterns driven by the innovation. Even individuals committed to the implementation of technology cannot escape this inherent conflict.

Human vs. Human. Educators may encounter friction with other professionals and interest groups over the implementation of technology in schools. These struggles occur when philosophical paradigms vie for prominence, when decisions about budget allocations must be made, when constitutional issues about the nature of personal and private communication are argued, and when the intersection of the information highway and copyright laws is examined.

> *Technology use by teachers is not a revolutionary trend; it is a rapidly accelerating evolutionary process.*

Human vs. Machine. Industrialization and mechanization have played the role of villain in many pieces of literature (e.g., *The Shame of the Cities* by Lincoln Steffens, *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens). Machines often are the target for the frustration and confusion people feel during the change process. For educators, the human vs. machine conflict exists when the competition between manufacturers of technology products becomes frenzied and consumers must make decisions that have long-term effects, when educators debate replacing existing technology with an emerging one, or when a customarily efficient professional struggles to complete a project using unfamiliar software or new technology.

Human vs. Self. These conflicts arise as teachers revitalize their philosophy, reconceptualize their role as educators, and reevaluate their instructional practices. Any actions that may upset the successful elements of the classroom culture are carefully evaluated. Teachers calculate the risks of such a change as they decide whether technology will be their colleague or competitor in the classroom. Accepting technology as a partner challenges teachers to welcome machines as part of the classroom environment. However, unlike the ubiquitous overhead or VCR, computers offer students personal, immediate, and interactive responses—something that teachers, despite their best efforts, cannot simultaneously give to each student.

Observing the Rising Action: An Impetus for Change

Historically, *literacy* refers to the ability to read and/or to write and includes the ability to comprehend, analyze, and apply that information (Kintgen, 1988). Computer literacy often indicates that an individual has mastered the mechanical aspects of computer use and has at least achieved a limited proficiency regarding its operation. Today, however, literacy and technological knowledge are becoming interdependent constructs.

Redefining Literacy. Technology is redefining what it means to be literate at the same time that literacy activities are setting standards for what it means to be a competent computer user. Individuals demonstrate their literacy when using technology to participate in, interact with, and contribute to society (Culbertson, 1986). Reading and writing proficiency is needed to access, comprehend, and prepare electronic texts.

Redefining Literacy Tools. It may be that this is "the late age of print" and that although the book will not disappear, "print will no longer define the organization and presentation of knowledge, as it has for the past five centuries" (Bolter, 1991, p. 2). Digitized information can be accessed readily and economically, and it is changing how society conducts business. Fax machines, e-mail, and the information superhighway have influenced how and when we communicate with each other.

Certainly, expanding access to the global computer networks and the proliferation of electronic texts during the past few years have significant ramifications for literacy education. Venezky (1994) suggests that "a new language arts curriculum is needed for the elementary and secondary schools, constructed around communication and information processing" (p. 52). Designers of such a curriculum would recognize the importance of visual displays such as charts, graphs, diagrams, and schematics to transmit information and, therefore, would emphasize the reading and writing skills that accompany their comprehension and construction. Elements of graphic design would be included in the curriculum as the author's selection of fonts, clip art, drawings, and video becomes part of the writing process (McCain, 1993). Hypertext (branching text that allows the reader to navigate various paths through the information) and multimedia technology (combining video, text, graphics, and audio) may become literary genres. Authors may be praised for writing with this nonlinear structure. Evaluation criteria would reflect these new forms and formats of composition.

Examining the Limitations of Print. Fundamental questions are being raised about the meaning of legibility, as applied to electronic texts. Publishers of electronic reading environments and printed texts consider illumination, color, printing surface, spacing, typography, and illustrations; however, the interactive capabilities between the reader and the electronic text differ markedly from that of the reader and the printed text. In addition, "for electronic texts, *when* to display the text on a computer screen may be as important a decision as *what* to display and *where* to display it" (Daniel & Reinking, 1987, pp. 24–35).

The limitations of the printed page are particularly apparent when contrasted with the versatility of multimedia technology. As diversity in school populations increases, the fixed characteristics of the printed page become more restrictive. The inclusion of students with disabilities, individualization of curriculum, and engagement in learning are hampered by a fixed medium that does not allow teachers or publishers "to build the capacity for individualization into the curriculum," to address varied learning styles with "alternative formats and presentations of information," or that does not "invite experimentation and active learning" (Rose, Meyer & Pisha, 1994, pp. 57–58).

Reaching the Turning Point

At the turning point, a character decides upon a course of action. In the story of teachers and technological change, the teacher may choose to do nothing to solve the problem. The teacher would either continue to struggle against the change or give up after becoming discouraged. Alternatively, the teacher may solve the conflicts by accepting the nature of the change process. History, theory, and research are pointing to the inevitability of instructional and methodological change caused by emerging technologies. The decision isn't one of whether or not to change. The choice is to identify which technology to explore first. Teachers then plan for and direct their professional growth.

Falling Action: Adapting to Technological Change

Teachers next assume responsibility for initiating the instructional, organizational, and methodological changes required for effective technology use. Professional organizations committed to literacy (e.g., National Council of Teachers of English, International Reading Association) and those committed to technological progress (e.g., International Society for Technology in Education) offer teachers assistance through membership in special interest groups, conferences, seminars, and publications. Colleagues and students, user groups, universities, and community-sponsored activities offer adults other avenues for learning about technology.

The Resolution

The integration of curriculum and technological resources is a significant shift in the classroom's social, instructional, and organizational structure. This shift occurs as teachers and students jointly use technology to participate in the affairs of a literate society.

History, theory, and research are pointing to the inevitability of instructional and methodological change caused by emerging technologies.

To increase the rate and scope of the integration's success, teachers must share pedagogical knowledge. This exchange must not be restricted to how the technology operates or how the programs are accessed and put to use. Information is needed about which software programs, online tools, or technology-supported informational resources best meet particular student needs; when and how technological resources can be integrated into the curriculum; and how the existing classroom organization can be adapted to accrue the benefits of using technology. As research continues, teachers will consider how technology use changes students' reading and writing processes, and which reading and writing opportunities, strategies, and techniques are most effective and appropriate.

Teachers can look for assistance from the National Reading Research Center (NRRC), supported through funding awarded to the University of Georgia and the University of Maryland. NRRC is responding to the technology-driven changes in the nature of literacy by integrating computer technology into its mission and research agenda. Specifically, NRRC has identified four areas of investigation: (1) school-based research into the questions of how literacy develops and can be supported in the classroom, (2) teachers as researchers to value teachers' contributions to the research process, (3) developing engaged readers who are self-sufficient and self-directed, and (4) relevance to the field to conduct research that contributed to improving literacy nationally (Reinking, 1993).

Rewriting the Story of Teachers and Technological Change

In a curious way, this article's structure acts as a framework for a hypertext document about teachers and technological change. Like the nodes of branching text, many of the theories and research cited will lead to further investigations. The differences and similarities between printed and electronic texts are not yet fully outlined, nor have the relationships between the processes of reading and writing in electronic environments been delineated. ●

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A Network Environment and Curriculum Integration

by Rachel L. Pinson
Technology Coordinator, Mountain Brook High School, Mountain Brook, Alabama

During last summer and this school year, my school system installed a local-area network (LAN) in each school, as well as a wide-area network (WAN) throughout the school system. I have visited each English class at the high school to explain those networks to our students and to "train" them in their use(s). I get a lot of blank stares when I start talking about "the network." Quite honestly, it seems like some huge monster that is just "out there." Those blank stares lead me to begin with this description: A computer network is at least two computers connected to each other in some way. In our system, the computers on the local-area network connect with unshielded twisted-pair wiring, and the wide-area network connects through dedicated phone lines.

Why would we want to go to the time, expense, and effort necessary to install, maintain, and use a computer network? The answer to that question is quite simple—to provide access to shared resources. It is possible to give more people access to a greater number of learning tools through a network than they could have individually through stand-alone computers.

Late in 1993, approximately 35 teachers, parents, administrators, and staff from all areas of the school system gathered to create an organized technology plan. That planning process ended when the plan was approved by the Board of Education; then implementation began. The short-term plan involved hiring a district-level technology coordinator, hiring local technology coordinators in each school in the system, and installing the local- and wide-area networks.

I was a part of the systemwide committee and, later, became the local technology coordinator for the high school. On paper, that plan seemed simple enough. At the high school, installation of the network was complicated by the construction of a new science wing and some classroom renovations. Consequently, I learned more than I need to know about building codes, fire walls, load-bearing walls, and so on. And that does not even begin to tell what I learned about wiring and cable records. Intensive training must occur before "the network" can be operational and before the technology integration even begins.

Without a doubt, some of the most important components of our plan were the goals that were included to address how technology would accomplish the aspirations that had been identified for our students and for our school system. Specifically, I would draw attention to five of those goals that enhance effective network integration:

1. *Provides timely, unlimited access to data and information.* In the most basic sense, this "goal" expresses the philosophy behind installing a network. If we are attempting to share resources, it only makes sense that we would get the most efficient tool available to help us accomplish that task. A computer network is that tool.

Access to information has always been available with stand-alone computers. The use of a network, in and of itself, does not change the information that is available. It does, however, change where, and sometimes how, information is obtained. "Timely access" is possible because people acquire information from multiple locations. People no longer have to be in the same location as the information they are seeking. Addi-

tionally, the technology facilitates the quickest retrieval of information from distant sites. Just as the telephone enables faster human communication, a computer network enables quick access to voluminous information.

Similarly, the information storage process does not change, but the information retrieval process does. At Mountain Brook, our library program is just one example of how a network provides broader access. With the network, students can search the library collection from any network workstation in the building. Previously, they could only search the library collection while they were in the library.

2. *Provides powerful, diverse modes of communication.* With the network, communication occurs in many different ways. Now, students and teachers can communicate through electronic mail, bulletin boards, and the Internet, to name a few possibilities. Through the use of various application packages (i.e., word processing and presentation packages) on the network, students and teachers experience visual as well as auditory communication. Especially for students, these packages reinforce the idea that communication occurs through writing as well as speaking.

3. *Promotes higher-level thinking skills to solve authentic problems.* There is much debate, particularly at secondary and higher education levels, about preparing students for the "real world." Regardless of what all we decide will be necessary for the real world, everyone agrees that functioning successfully in the real world will involve the ability to use technology. Consequently, there is no better experience to give to our students than to expose them to the type of technology infrastructure (i.e., a network) that they will work with after they leave high school.

4. *Promotes efficient and cost-effective use of time and resources for management, teaching, and learning.* Teachers never have enough time. The network enables them to create and distribute their materials, as well as giving teachers a way to gain ideas and information from other teachers. The fact that everyone does not have to create and re-create the same materials allows them to use their limited time more efficiently.

In each school, administrative software programs like SchoolMaster are allowing teachers to streamline daily activities such as attendance and gradebook procedures. Using the computerized attendance module means that absences can be recorded directly from the classroom. Using a computerized grading system cuts down on the amount of time that teachers have to spend either averaging their grades or getting them turned into the office so report cards can be printed. With this system, teachers can save their grades on the computer, and they are transferred directly to the front office. Essentially, it eliminates an entire step in the process, and that means no more grade sheets and scanning forms to be filled out.

5. *Facilitates collaborative learning/teaching to maximize student success.* For several years, I have read about "collaborative learning" as a teaching methodology. After working with educational technology for five years, I can think of no better tool for encouraging collaboration, for teachers and students, than a networked computer environment. No single person can know everything about technology, and the common need to utilize the technology as a tool fosters collaboration among all members of the school community. To some degree, network environments make collaboration "happen." It appears effortless and magical, but it is present, nonetheless.

Training Essential for Integration

Regardless of the plan or the goals, it is not enough for any school system to provide only the equipment to build a computer network. Additionally, teachers and students must receive adequate training. In many cases, teachers and students will not only be asked to use the equipment and resources for themselves, but they will also be expected to integrate the equipment and resources into their daily teaching and learning activities.

Ultimately, the most important component of effective network integration is training. Our training started during the summer of 1993, when all staff members of the school system were invited to attend summer training sessions that focused on computer basics, the network, and the software packages purchased for the system. The training model that we adopted was a proficiency-based one with a core training team. That training team consisted of the district technology coordinator, local school technology coordinators, and selected teachers. In that model, systemwide staff were trained to perform a number of technology-based proficiencies during the first year of the network implementation. Some of the expected technology proficiencies included: working knowledge of personal computers and networks, working knowledge of systemwide software and services, ability to evaluate hardware and software, and ability to effectively integrate technology into the classroom. According to the training plan, "It is the responsibility of all personnel to determine by what means they will reach proficiency based on their present level of expertise, special needs, and learning styles" (Summary Report: Mountain Brook City Schools Summer Technology Training, 1994, by Donna Williamson).

Ultimately, the most important component of effective network integration is training.

The second component of the training involved a needs assessment

for all staff. All staff members were asked to rank themselves in terms of their current technology proficiency. Those self-evaluations were used to determine the kind of training that was necessary and the frequency of the sessions that would be offered throughout the summer. The staff evaluated their proficiency again after the summer training was completed, and they evaluated their proficiencies yet again at the end of the school year. This process is important in planning for appropriate training, but it also communicates the belief that individuals are responsible for their progress.

From the very first training session, teachers saw ways that the network could make their work easier and more efficient. After teachers realized how the network made their day-to-day tasks easier, they began to be very creative about the ways that technology affected their instruction and classroom activities.

So what does all this have to do with curriculum integration? To find the answer to that, I think we have to look at what *integration* means. According to the American Heritage Dictionary (3rd edition, 1992), three definitions of *integration* would apply to what we try to do with technology in the classroom:

1. *"Act of making a whole by bringing all parts together."* Putting computers in classrooms cannot accomplish anything unless they are a part of the whole educational process. Teachers, administrators, school boards, and parents who think otherwise are destined to be disappointed. Anybody who walks into a classroom where computers are being used, to any extent, will quickly see that students are not nearly as enamored with technology as the "adults" are. That should tell educators something about technology integration. It needs to be as low-key and transparent as possible. Teachers who use technology effectively know that they must include technology as one component, and one component only, of what they do with students.

2. *"The act of joining with something else, uniting."* I think that we, as educators, have to connect technology to something else. It is not enough to expect that it will stand completely on its own. Students are grasping for connections in their education that are relevant to what they are involved in and interested in every day. Technology, because of its prevalence in our society, is relevant; when coupled with the curriculum, it can unite people with each other as well as unite them with the technology that shapes their lives.

3. *"Making part of a larger unit."* Quite simply, technology connects people to the world. It makes each person a part of the world that goes beyond our classrooms. Our work with telecommunications has resulted in our students learning, firsthand, about other cultures throughout the world. It is exciting to see students come to realize that teenagers in other places have many of the same thoughts, questions, ideas, and dreams that they do.

One other observation that I would make about the power of technology to connect people involves our special education students. Technology, in some cases, has made their disabilities seem completely irrelevant. This is quite a change for them, given that much of their educational experience involves working with and around their disabilities. Technology serves as an equalizer for them.

Unfortunately, there is no formula for "effective technology integration." It involves thoughtful preparation, versatile equipment, continuous training, and untold amounts of patience. Admittedly, in Mountain Brook, we are still early in the process of trying to teach the teachers about integrating technology. But here are a few lessons we have learned so far:

1. Among any faculty, there is a very broad range of computer proficiency and comfort.

2. Teachers should always have options about how and to what degree technology integration will take place within their classroom. But that does not mean that they should have the option not to use technology at all.

3. Tasks that can be accomplished more quickly or easily without technology should be done without technology. Doing tasks with technology just to say that they are being done that way ensures that focus is kept on the technology itself, rather than on allowing technology to be a tool.

4. When using technology, teachers should start with units, projects, and assignments that they have already developed. It is easier to do the same things in different ways than to try and create "technology assignments."

5. Teachers should be expected to teach other people about the technology that they are using. It is a very efficient use of personnel; it helps all members of a faculty get ideas about using technology, and it reinforces that the best way to learn something is to teach it.

I often say that I came to my job accidentally. In truth, I stand somewhere between the generation that did not really use technology and the generation that uses nothing else. I am a teacher because I had a teacher who taught me to love Shakespeare. She did it with "old-fashioned" methods—enthusiasm, persistence, openness, and discipline. Unfortunately, those methods are not always entertaining enough for today's student. Technology bridges the gap between old and new, and it allows us to still be able to make students develop a passion for learning. ●

Writing Instruction with Computers: Developing Student Writers Who Care and Share

by Tim Courtney, West Chicago Community High School, Illinois

I believe in writing as a process. My teaching reflects this view, as do my various evolving methods of evaluation. I have embraced word-processing computers because they help writers write more effectively, and they have improved writing instruction in my classes, reinforcing my teaching philosophy concerning writing.

Whether writing with pen and paper or on a computer, writers should let their ideas flow. For example, when writing this article I sketched an informal outline partially on paper and partially on computer disk. I have found both methods to be easy and useful. In fact, I frequently utilize both pen and paper and on-screen prewriting. When composing a first draft, "correctness" is not a major concern; the focus is on conveying ideas effectively and clearly. Once a writer is familiar with the basics of the word-processing program in use, this rough-draft writing on-screen becomes possible. After the first draft is complete, computers' spell-checking capabilities can alert students to possible errors. This simple function draws students' attention to errors, either in spelling or typing, which the writer can easily correct. Some programs also offer a thesaurus. Good writers love this feature, which puts a variety of word choices literally at their fingertips.

In my classes I try to foster a cooperative, sharing atmosphere, with writers helping other writers, sometimes collaborating on a piece of writing. After the rough-draft stage, my students often are required to read their work aloud to a small group. My students read to each other, to peer tutors, to parents, and to me. Writers may read from a printed copy or directly off the screen. The student writers face the screen, reading aloud to several other students who have their backs to the screen, unable to see the text. I do not allow listeners of the first draft to see the actual writing, so that they may fully concentrate on the ideas and the organization without being distracted by errors in spelling, capitalization, or punctuation.

When students are working in a computer lab, it is easy to ask listeners if a section is understandable or well-phrased or how to improve it. If the paper is written out for homework, students may not have anyone knowledgeable enough to ask for clarification as they write. The listening groups will then respond to the writing. Typically, responses include what the listeners identified as specific strengths in the pieces of writing and suggestions for improvement. The writers type the comments from the group at the end of the essay and save them for future reference. The students then go to work eliminating the problems. The listeners are accountable for offering specific, helpful advice. The writers are responsible for addressing the advice offered. They can disagree with the recommendations, provided they have good rationale for doing so. The writers must be able to defend their position. However, since the writers "own" the paper, they must ultimately determine whether to change or not. This results in much discussion in the groups as writers struggle to determine the best approach. While I am often called in by groups or individuals as a consultant or mediator, usually the writers see some wisdom in the advice offered by their writing peers and make some changes to address their criticisms. This method sparks much intelligent dialogue about writing, and students demonstrate that they are thinking about what they write, rather than simply completing work.

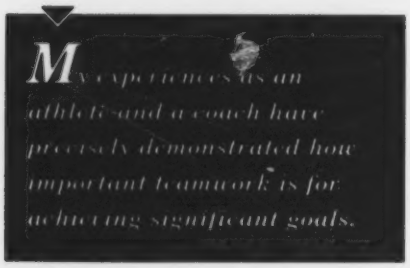
As a result of the ease of revision with computers, students are much more willing to revise. Instead of simply copying their work more neatly, they can then spend this time on significant revision tasks. If their group advised reorganization, they can move words, sentences, and paragraphs with the touch of a few keys. Frequently, students must add more support to improve an essay. On a computer, a writer can easily insert examples and quotations without discarding much of the existing text. Students can be required to turn in multiple drafts (either on computer disk or paper) so the instructor can trace the evolution and revision of the writing.

One of the side effects of composing on computers is that you and your students learn a new way of writing. With persistence and practice, composing on a computer screen becomes easier and more natural for many writers. For many computer-literate students this is easier than writing by hand. However, for some, this will initially seem difficult and it will take some time (it varies with individuals) until each student feels comfortable composing on a computer keyboard.

The English Classroom: A Writing Studio

Whenever possible, I try to create a classroom climate similar to an artist's studio. Leading the studio is a practicing artist, a "master," who offers instruction and guidance throughout the process. It is very helpful for students to see me as a practicing artist (writer). Whenever possible, I let students see me writing as they are also writing, because it is useful that they see the instructor experiencing some of the same trials that they experience throughout the writing process. Sometimes I will do the same assignment I have given to

the class. I join a writing group which helps evaluate my writing through my various drafts and revisions. I try to write regularly for a variety of publications, so much of the writing that I do is "genuine." I occasionally invite a writer to proofread a piece of my writing. (I invited an especially strong writer in one of my sophomore classes to proofread this article.) I use the same tactic as a coach. For example, if a golfer struggles to escape from sand traps, I will describe the correct method. Then I drop some balls into the nearest sand trap and demonstrate how to best hit this shot. The player *hears* how to hit the shot and then *sees* the shot correctly demonstrated. Working at my own


My experiences as an athlete and a coach have precisely demonstrated how important teamwork is for achieving significant goals.

writing skills helps me become a better teacher of writing.

Another role in the studio is that of the apprentice. Junior and senior peer writing tutors are frequently available in the computer lab to assist students through the various stages of the writing process. These specially trained interns write well and possess interpersonal skills. They assist in the "writing studio" as peer writing tutors, and they take part in various prewriting activities such as brainstorming, outlining, listening to pieces of writing, and offering positive feedback and suggestions for improvement. At the student's request, tutors read entire essays or a particular portion of an essay on computer screen. These apprentices can then help individuals correct problems noted by readers and acknowledged by the writer. Tutors can also help plan additions to the existing text. Having a sort of intermediary between students and the teacher can lessen the risk of students being too shy or embarrassed to ask for help. Tutors can take time to listen and offer individualized assistance to student writers. Tutors are trained not to do the student's work; rather, they emphasize the strengths in student writing as they try to eliminate or strengthen the weaknesses. Studies of the peer writing program at our high school indicate that students can be of great help to other students.

Working as a Team

I have developed several team-writing experiences that work particularly well in a computer lab. My experiences as an athlete and a coach have precisely demonstrated how important teamwork is for achieving significant goals. I have channeled this belief into my classroom, since many jobs and careers involve being able to work effectively with others. The SCANS Report (1992) advises teachers, "Look beyond your discipline and your classroom to other courses your students take, to your community, and to the lives of your students outside school. Help your students connect what they learn in class to the world outside." The report emphasizes the importance of students acquiring interpersonal skills for future success in the workplace. "Effective workers . . . can work on teams, teach others, serve customers, lead, negotiate, and work well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds." In my classes, teamwork is an important skill to be taught, developed, nurtured, and, ultimately, evaluated.

As a practicing artist I play a major role in this evaluation, but peer tutors offer their input as do team members and the author. In one writing project, teams develop a plot line for a hero story. They plan the setting and characterization for the team story. The group then divides the writing tasks equally and begins to write. The group sits together in the computer lab, positioned sequentially in the order of the part of the story they are writing. As they write they discuss their episode with the writer of the previous portion (seated to their left) and the writer of the following segment (seated to their right). When all parts are finished, they are cut and pasted into one document which the team and other readers can examine as a whole. The group as a whole is responsible for the entire finished product. Compromise is essential to team success. Student performance on the project is then measured in a variety of ways. The quality of the product (the story) is evaluated by the instructor. Every member of the team is asked a series of questions about the performance of the team and each individual on the team. Students also evaluate their own performance through this format. Peer writing tutors and the instructor share formal and informal observations throughout the story-writing process. By using computers as a writing tool, the individuals are allowed to work semi-independently for a time on part of a team-planned basic plot, before working closely as a group on fine-tuning the entire work.

Computer Portfolios

Establishing writing portfolios is a valuable way to gauge student writing performance. A collection of student work can be particularly helpful when attempting to measure progress and improvement over a period of time. My students save all of their writing on a disk. All essays are read by me, but not all are assigned a traditional grade. I react to all essays in some way. I regularly require students to select pieces of their writing for a "quality review." Some of these essay choices are dictated by me; some are entirely students' choices. Whenever faced with the choice of which essay they would like graded for quality, students can review the pieces in question on computer. The essays are all there for their perusal and self-evaluation. Student writing is also collected on a disk for the instructor to examine at any time.

Revision: Returning to the Scene of the Crime

Periodically, I require student writers to return to a previously written piece to revise it. Often they will select an early assignment because they feel their writing skills have advanced significantly since the beginning of the school year. Often this early piece is "embarrassing"; they see now how much better they could have done. Often they welcome this opportunity to "start anew" or "erase" a bad chapter of their student life. All pieces of writing are easily accessible for the students on their disk. They can return to the piece and devote all of their time to developing a revision plan and acting on this plan. They waste no time writing or typing parts that are already created. They simply add new elements, and move or change previously created elements. As they consider changes, they refer back to comments made by reading groups, tutors, or the instructor, found either on a variety of evaluation sheets or actually typed and saved on the disk. Students are held accountable for correcting problems that are noted by listeners or readers of their writing. The revised piece will be evaluated with several questions such as: Has the student correctly identified the strengths and weaknesses of the writing? Has the student made a sound plan for eliminating the weaknesses? How effectively has the student revised and improved the piece of writing?

Taking the Byte Out of Grading

Lately, I have begun evaluating some writing directly on the student's disks. I read the essay on-screen and type comments and suggestions within the student's text. I use a different typeface so the writer will be able to distinguish between what she or he wrote and what I wrote. In the past, I have experimented with grading papers using a tape recorder. Students turned in a cassette tape with their essays and I spoke about the essay on tape for the student to later play back as he or she viewed the paper. Although effective, it was time-consuming and cumbersome for both teacher and students. By typing my comments into the student's writing on disk, I have achieved much the same effect in a more efficient way.

A Final Thought

The use of computers has improved writing instruction in my classroom, while reinforcing my beliefs about writing as a process. One mixed blessing with this approach is that I must spend more in-class time writing in the computer lab. This takes more class time, but this will probably reverse itself as more households have computers and computers become more interchangeable. One advantage is that I have more contact with writers throughout the writing process. Peer writing tutors have been valuable in assisting writers and providing more time for me to hold conferences with writers. Computers have enabled me to put more of my beliefs about writing into practice effectively. As a result, my students are becoming more proficient writers as I become a more effective teacher of writing. ●

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A Few Recommended Books for Young Adults Interested in Learning about Other Cultures

by Louann Reid, Colorado State University

Someone recently asked me to recommend books that could be used in a team-taught English and geography class; the books would teach seventh graders about the land and peoples of either Asia, Africa, or the Middle East. That's a pretty specific request, but I think it's indicative of at least two trends in using literature in middle schools. First, the literature is asked to serve purposes beyond just literary study and, second, there is increasing interest in teaching about other cultures. Because of its ability to convey human stories and emotions along with information about people and cultures, literature should be considered part of any interdisciplinary unit. Furthermore, young adult literature, because of the ability of readers to relate to the age and interests of the protagonists, is one excellent tool.

I've reviewed here five novels and one collection of short stories that have in common a focus on people different from those usually portrayed in the classics. Most of these books were published in 1993 or 1994, and several are already in paperback. Some would be appropriate for an entire class to read; others should be recommended to individuals or small groups. Before recommending a book to students, it would be a good idea for you to read it.

If you have suggestions of other books to read, or ways to use these, I would be interested in hearing from you.

Deep Dream of the Rain Forest
by Malcolm Bosse
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1993, 179 pp.)

Bayang, a young Iban warrior in Borneo, had a compelling dream of the future. If he can discover its true meaning, it will affect not only him but also his entire tribe. As he sets off into the jungle to find the dream's meaning, he takes Tambong, a girl with a crippled foot, because he believes the dream said that she must lead him. After several days of ambiguous signs, they meet Harry Windsor, a 15-year-old orphaned son of British parents who now is visiting his uncle, a British government officer stationed in Borneo. Separated from his group, Harry is captured by Bayang and Tambong but he does not understand their fierce desire to possess his mother's locket and their often conflicting messages about whether he will live or die. As understanding and acceptance grow, the three become friends with a common goal—fulfilling the meaning of Bayang's dream and completing the story of who he is to be.

I liked the characters. Although a lot happened in a few pages, I felt I knew the characters well enough to believe in their actions and ideas. The message of finding your identity is strong and important. I think that teachers who are looking for literature to use in interdisciplinary contexts would find this one helpful; there is so much detail of the flora and fauna of the jungle and the customs of several tribes who inhabit it.

Julie
by Jean Craighead George
(HarperCollins, 1994, 226 pp.)

In this sequel to *Julie of the Wolves*, George answers the question that countless readers have asked in the past 20 years: "What happens to Julie after she leaves the wolves?" The answer combines culture, families, beliefs, and beautiful characterization. Now nearly 15, Julie has found her father but has never really left her wolf friends behind. When the wolves threaten the livelihood of the entire village, she must find a way to resolve the conflict so the wolves will be kept alive. She becomes more involved with the people in her village, but Julie still has the understanding of a wild animal, an understanding that results in a very satisfying book. The conflicts between civilization and wilderness predominate in the decisions that characters must make, as do the conflicts between the Eskimo ways and the White ways. Strong messages of cooperation and cultural understanding are wrapped up in an outstanding story.

A Bone from a Dry Sea
by Peter Dickinson
(Delacorte, 1992, 199 pp.)
An ALA Best Book for Young Adults, 1994

Separated by four million years, two girls are significant in helping their people. The prehistoric girl, Li, saves her sea-dependent people from natural disasters and their own ignorance. As the most intelligent girl in the tribe, Li knows things beyond instinct that make her mysterious and powerful to the others. The dolphin bone that she wears around her neck reappears four million years later when the sea has dried to desert, and Vinny is helping her father on a paleontological dig in Africa. Vinny, too, is quite intelligent and her find suggests major changes in the previously accepted theories of evolution.

The technique of parallel stories is useful, adding an element of suspense because the reader knows what has happened in one time period and is curious about how it will emerge in the later time. Both girls are strong, intelligent leaders with common sense, and the supporting characters are believable. The reader gets to see variations on the theme of change, an important theme for adolescents. The book was originally published in Britain, where the author lives.

Shadow of the Dragon
by Sherry Garland
(Harcourt Brace, 1993, 314 pp.)
An ALA Best Book for Young Adults, 1994

Sixteen-year-old Danny Vo is caught between the culture of his Vietnamese family and his American friends. The situation worsens when he cousin arrives from a reeducation camp and gets involved with a Vietnamese gang. In addition, Danny wants to go out with blonde Tiffany Schultz, who likes him as much as he likes her. The problem is that Tiffany's older brother is a skinhead who is irate about Danny seeing Tiffany. The tension builds, climaxing in a violent act that changes everyone's lives.

This is an excellent story, filled with cultural details and complex characterization. No one is entirely good or bad; they are just human, and their motivations are clearly drawn. Junior and senior high students will enjoy the story while also absorbing details of history and culture. Even better, they will see that nothing is as simple as it may appear.

Grab Hands and Run
by Frances Temple
(Orchard Books, 1993, 165 pp.)
An ALA Best Book for Young Adults, 1994

Felipe's father, Jacinto, is not afraid to speak his mind, but that is a life-threatening attitude in El Salvador. When he disappears, Paloma takes her two children and they head for Canada, where they have arranged to meet if anything like this should happen. The book tells of the hazards on the long trip, of the threats from *coyotes* and unscrupulous people who hate refugees and take advantage of them. For every unscrupulous person they meet, however, there are also good people, priests and peasants alike, who help them out. Twelve-year-old Felipe learns more than he wants to know. He comes to believe that growing up is "Not getting taller, but thinking for yourself. Questioning instead of just going along."

Upper elementary and middle school students would like this book. Its quick pace and constant adventure would appeal to them. Felipe has a strong voice, and his fears and hopes seem very real. The author hosted a Salvadoran refugee family while they waited for Canadian citizenship; Felipe's story is based on theirs.

Join In: Multiethnic Short Stories by Outstanding Writers for Young Adults
Edited by Donald R. Gallo
(Delacorte Press, 1993, 257 pp.)

These 17 short stories portray teenagers from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, including Puerto Rican, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Japanese, Cuban, Lebanese, Chinese, African American, Laotian, Chicano, and Pueblo Indian. Gallo first sought writers who were also members of the groups they wrote about, later expanding his invitation to writers who were not people of color but who had "created sensitive and insightful novels featuring teenage characters from different ethnic backgrounds." The result is a delightful mix of stories about American teenagers working out family relationships, learning to drive, falling in love, playing baseball, and wanting to be accepted. ●

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October 1995 (July 1 deadline)
Implementing Innovations

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▶ IN THIS ISSUE

Implementing Innovations

by Henry Kiernan, editor

Staff development is still considered a relatively recent function of schools and universities. In the 1960s, the emphasis was on inservice activities such as writing content goals and behavioral objectives for improved lessons. This emphasis on what to teach shifted in the 1970s to the exploration of how to teach. With the recent examination of teacher behaviors, today's plethora of staff development programs began including such topics as learning styles, effective teaching strategies, critical thinking skills, and cooperative learning, among other areas. Very few training programs on these topics were available in the early 1970s, before the staff development movement began. Based on a raft of state and national reports concerning the condition of public education, increased attention has been focused on approaches to staff development that enhance academic knowledge and professional performance.

Yet those who work as leaders in school districts have learned the dangers of launching a major new initiative without carefully devoting months to persuasion and argument. True experimentation rarely is permitted, because everybody demands certainty and proof that the innovation will work. Innovations too often arrive with large promises, yet the morning after we are often left hungover and disillusioned.

Much of the work about how schools change has stressed how innovations are adopted and then implemented. Less is known about how innovations become institutionalized or lead to changed teaching practice. While there is evidence to support the interrelatedness of staff development, implementation of innovation, and student outcomes (see Michael Fullan, *1990 Yearbook of ASCD,* Alexandria, VA: ASCD), there is little systematic data on how the implementation of staff development training transforms to adoption of a different teaching practice. Even fewer attempts have been made to evaluate the effectiveness of staff development programs using measures of change in actual teacher performance. After teachers have been oriented, trained, and coached in implementing innovations, several questions arise. When do teachers perceive the effect of an innovation on their own teaching practices? What evidence is there that individual teachers actually use an innovation? How is the staff development effort maintained and refined?

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The richness and diversity evident in the models and stories presented in this issue suggest that the purpose for each staff development effort ultimately rests on increasing the thinking and professional skills of staff. As John Dewey put it, "All that the wisest man can do is to observe what is going on more widely and more minutely and then select more carefully from what is noted just those factors which point to something to happen" (1916, *Learning and Education,* New York: Macmillan). ●

The Honors Portfolio: One Case of Departmental Innovation

by Bruce Robbins and Driek Zirinsky, Boise State University, Idaho

Innovation is highly valued in professional discussions of curriculum development and school reform. Such discussions are usually very general, theoretical, or hypothetical. What does it look like when a real English department effectively innovates? What are the features of successful departmental innovation? We considered these questions as part of our yearlong ethnographic study of one successful English department, known in our state for leadership and innovation. We observed this department during one year as it designed and implemented an innovation in the curriculum—an honors portfolio. We think the ways in which this one high school English department originated, designed, and implemented its honors portfolio may provide a useful portrait of department-level curricular innovation.

For our research, we defined an English department as a curriculum decision-making community. Among other things, we asked what kind of a community a department might be, and how its members decide about curriculum. In researching the process of departmental curriculum decision-making, we wondered what prompts innovation, where new ideas come from, and how they come to be accepted and widespread in practice. We wondered how a department might acknowledge or allow for differences among individual department members and still operate collaboratively to make group decisions and take unified actions.

The Innovation: An Honors Portfolio

Several years ago, the Mid-Valley High School English Department eliminated tracking in the English program. By 1994 the department wanted new ways to challenge and recognize talented students in mixed-ability classes. Furthermore, some parents who were unhappy with the elimination of tracking for advanced students were calling for the restoration of advanced placement English classes. To address both of these needs, the department instituted an elective portfolio program intended both to challenge students and to award year-end honors to students whose portfolios earned the designation.

The honors portfolio, which any student could elect to produce and submit, was intended to encourage and reward exceptional work by listing an honors designation on the student's transcript along with the course grade. The portfolio was to represent excellent work done with regular class assignments over the course of the school year, as well as some self-motivated work done outside of class, work which demonstrated excellence at or above grade level. The portfolio would challenge students to choose more difficult books and to do more reading, as well as to select more challenging assignments when options were available and to improve or perfect their work even after it had been graded.

As the teachers envisioned it, the portfolio was to be more than a folder of papers. At the beginning of the year, students would assess their strengths and set goals for achievement that they would document in the year's portfolio. For the final collection, students were to write a cover letter that introduced their work and provided a self-assessment. Peer collaboration could be encouraged because the work was individualized, and both teachers and parents would be in a position to encourage and support students to excel. The portfolio served to document choices made by the students throughout the year that reflected self-discipline, challenge, and learning, and that resulted in high-quality work. The teacher was to act as a resource and guide, but a panel of outside evalua-

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tors would decide if honors were earned. It was assumed that providing a vehicle for acknowledging superior work would not only enable teachers to better motivate talented students to exceed class or grade-level expectations, but that the portfolio would also be a device for parents to encourage excellence from their children at home. The department believed that parents pushing for advanced classes would be pleased with the implementation of an honors portfolio.

How Does a Department Decide to Innovate?

We often speak of innovations as if they are something magically new, but more often departmental innovations are an active response to a chain of events, special circumstances, and student needs. In this case, the development of an honors portfolio program was part of a much longer pattern of innovation—the department's decision four years earlier to eliminate tracked classes. The major reason cited for the decision to eliminate tracking was to better challenge all of the students. The teachers' accounts of their process of eliminating tracking centered on a perceived problem of unequal opportunities, intensive teacher investigation and research by active members of the department, departmental discussion and planning, and careful implementation of an alternative system introduced gradually over several years. Accompanying elimination of both basic and AP English classes were plans to enrich the regular curriculum in a number of ways, including broader student choices among themed readings and teaching writing in workshop settings.

Talented students were now to be challenged within regular mixed-ability classes, but the English department also offered an elective honors seminar specifically to help senior English students prepare for the AP exam. Few students elected the seminar or took the exam. Nonetheless, a group of parents urged the reinstatement of advanced placement classes for talented students. Some of the teachers, faced with the full range of the mixed-ability classroom, also acknowledged a need to better motivate and challenge advanced students, but they wanted to find a way to do so without re-creating the problems associated with tracking. The parents' point of view and the classroom performances of past and present talented students were the topic of many informal conversations within the English department—in the hallways between classes, during lunch, and at TGIF sessions after school. Although such discussion of problems can sometimes be dismissed as mere "war stories" or griping, such conversation can also serve as a tool to define and understand a problem as a community. Solutions cannot be found until the nature of a problem becomes clearer to all the members.

We noted that the honors portfolio project began with the department's recognition of a specific, concrete local problem, rather than with a theory, or with a prepackaged plan for teachers to implement. The idea was not suggested by an administrator or curriculum director. It did not come about because a department member heard about it at a conference and thought that it was a good idea for them. Moreover, the unresolved issue that the portfolio addressed was perceived by most of the English teachers as one concerning the whole department. Even though individual English teachers differed about what should be done, the problem was considered an obstacle to meeting group goals or values or ideals, thus making it a problem for the group as a whole.

Where Do New Ideas Come From?

When we asked the teachers where the idea for the honors portfolio came from, their answers varied considerably, and most thought they were present when the idea began. A few recalled that in the hallway after school in the spring before our research began, three of them were talking about pressure to reinstate AP and about the difficulty of challenging their most talented students. Apparently one of the teachers, Susan, thought of a connection to some of her reading about writing assessment and suggested, "What if we had some sort of portfolio?" Susan described the discussion as "a kind of joint effort" in which the idea was generated informally there in the hallway. Later, these teachers independently talked about the emerging idea with Marie, the department member officially charged with curriculum tasks. Marie, who was concerned about the parent group pressuring her to restore AP English, envisioned the idea as a possible way to satisfy the parents.

Other teachers remembered the honors portfolio beginning a week or two later, during an inservice meeting of high school and junior high English teachers. That day Marie recommended forming a committee to address advanced placement issues. One of the teachers who joined this committee recalled that the idea of portfolios "just came up" while everyone was "gabbing." "The idea was something that came about very quickly," she remembered, perhaps in part because several of the teachers were already familiar with portfolio assessment in some other form. The AP committee of four English department members then began to design guidelines for an honors portfolio, applying what they knew about portfolios to the problem of motivating achievement and assigning honors designations.

In this case, ownership of the idea for the honors portfolio might have been attributed to any number of individuals: the teacher who first suggested it, the three who first discussed it, the department's curriculum leader, or the committee. But the teachers' various accounts suggest that most of them felt they had contributed to its origin and that the

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idea was partly theirs. To them, the honors portfolio was not somebody else's domain or a predetermined policy presented to them to approve or disapprove or simply to implement. Not only did they all participate in constructing the idea, they assumed that the task of finding an idea to resolve a dilemma included them. The sense that the problem and its solution were departmental concerns which involved them all may characterize the department as innovative, or at least as collaborative.

Joint ownership of ideas is valuable, and perhaps essential to an innovative department, but new ideas must come from somewhere. At Mid-Valley High, the teacher who first suggested a portfolio and those teachers who first recognized the potential in the suggestion were already familiar with the concept of portfolios because of their ongoing professional work. Within the department as a whole there was a smaller group of teachers who actively read professional material, attended conferences, and took university courses. These teachers regularly engaged in discussion of professional issues as a natural part of their conversation, and quite often new ideas would be generated as a result of the talk of these teachers. Although ordinary members of the department, they provided for the department a necessary resource of wider information and possible solutions to problems.

How Do New Ideas Become Accepted?

Within an innovative department it is important to have sources of new ideas and an atmosphere in which construction of ideas is shared. But successful innovations also require structures that convert good ideas into departmental action. The committee that devised the guidelines for the honors portfolio considered its task a professionally responsible and useful, not perfunctory, one, and committed genuine time and effort to it, including more reading about portfolios and committee meetings during the summer. They wrestled with a number of issues in order to produce a draft of guidelines.

When our observations began in August, the committee was just presenting its drafted design and guidelines to the department. In portions of several English department meetings devoted to discussion of the honors portfolio, we noted that the committee members seemed to hope that the presentations would both explain the plan and would persuade their colleagues of the worth of the project. However, the committee also clearly intended the meetings as revision sessions in which the committee anticipated and welcomed changes in their purposely unfinished document. Part of the time committee members explained their understandings to colleagues or answered questions, but just as often the department members raised unanticipated issues that led to on-the-spot decision-making and revision of the guidelines. Everyone considered this the usual process—a process that was inclusive, respectful of individual differences within the department on the issues related to the honors portfolio, and extremely open-ended. It was a process that seemed aimed at extending ownership of the innovation to all members of the department.

Joint ownership of ideas is valuable, and perhaps essential to an innovative department, but new ideas must come from somewhere.

The number of issues that were raised and resolved by department members during these first meetings about the design and implementation of the honors portfolio reflects this inclusive process of persuasion, ongoing evolution of the idea, and flexibility for individuals in implementation. The department discussed questions such as: Could students begin the portfolios after the beginning of the school year? What materials may or must be included? How could teachers expect independent work, yet still give students enough help or guidance? How could teachers support participating students as a group outside of classes without violating their previous tracking decisions and inadvertently creating an elite group? How could teachers evaluate the progress of the project as well as the students' work, both during the process and at the end? How could they balance some teachers' needs for a specific structure or list of criteria for the portfolio with other teachers' needs to leave the project open to development and change as the project proceeded? What should they do about students who might want to do the portfolio but who would not have the talent or time to succeed; would doing the portfolio result in motivation and learning, or could it result in discouragement?

Through the committee-led discussions, joint construction of the project was extended to the whole department. The project was not a "done deal," but still open to and in need of revision and refinement. In department sessions, the project was as much constructed and reconstructed by the whole department as it was approved by it. Objections, questions, and suggestions were carefully considered in an atmosphere of accommodation, and they often led to elaborations or changes in the guidelines.

Underlying many of the issues raised in meetings was the group's desire to maintain a delicate balance between respecting individual differences among the various teachers' instructional styles and beliefs on the one hand, and, on the other, coming to a consensus that would allow the department to enact the project as a unified group. This too might be a trait of an innovative department. It

was the department's intention that the honors portfolio be a reflection or extension of regularly assigned class work, not new assignments that added work for the teachers; therefore, the students' portfolios would necessarily reflect some differences from one teacher to another. The group wanted to maintain individual teachers' independence and autonomy in classroom instruction. On the other hand, as the committee chair pointed out in one meeting, in order for the project to work teachers had to make sure that their assignments offered challenging options so that a student "isn't doing a beautiful job of filling in a worksheet instead of a beautiful job of something that takes some critical thinking skills."

One way the department negotiated this balance was by considering viewpoints of all who wished to participate and designing a program assumed to be a compromise among participating group members. The plan left teachers free to design their own instruction, but determined that certain group goals, such as providing challenging assignment options, must be met. The department intuitively understood the need to persuade rather than coerce members to participate. It encouraged broad involvement in planning the details of the innovation, developed group goals and tasks, but allowed considerable individual flexibility in implementation.

Serious questions were raised by department members about the idea being presented to them. The questions raised and addressed reflect the workings of an innovative department. This department was tolerant and open to difficult questions and serious problems. More to the point, it cared enough about its curriculum work as a group to bring these problems up and work on them. Less innovative departments, we suggest, are more apt to avoid tough problems and sweep them under the rug. The Mid-Valley High English Department assumed that difficulties exist in any implemented innovation, and it was patient with the process of compromise and resolution involved in department-level planning.

How Do New Ideas Become Established?

By the middle of September, the department had come to agreement about its plan for an honors portfolio and began to implement the project. Even during early planning, the first year of implementation had been assumed to be a pilot or try-out period. Most of the department members saw the honors portfolio as a program that was ready to succeed this school year, but they also assumed that their experience with this year's implementation would certainly result in modifications during the year and for the following year.

We observed the department's sense of the provisional nature of its plan during the department meetings when some decisions were purposely left undecided. Teachers' remarks indicated that they expected that these questions or issues would sort themselves out during the school year or else that teachers would be better able to address them after everyone was further into implementing the project. One teacher even decided to create her own portfolio as another way to learn more during this first-year experience.

During the year, circumstances did sometimes demonstrate the need for changes. In-progress evaluations of honors portfolios had been planned for the end of the semester—a time period during the pre-Christmas and post-Christmas semester grading rush. It became clear that time constraints were more severe than anticipated, and the ambitious midterm evaluation that had been planned was not realistic. Instead, a number of teachers voluntarily exchanged and read samples of folders to provide some feedback to students from the "outside" perspective of another teacher. Also, some teachers wanted to see if they and their students were "doing it right," since in its first year of implementation, norm expectations were still unclear or developing. Although these exchanges may have occurred later than planned, they did create movement toward more common understandings and conformity by those who participated, as well as demonstrating a commitment to the honors portfolio work. As further evidence of the unfolding and evolutionary nature of the innovation, final portfolio evaluation plans were not confirmed until spring, when funding was secured to pay for stipends to outside "expert" evaluators. Using outside experts had been one of several strategies on hold until funding was achieved.

Learning and changes during implementation of the project, then, were assumed to be an ongoing part of the process. Design and development of the project were not separate from implementation, but a part of it. Implementation was both putting into action the department's plan and a continuation of the designing and planning process. The implementation process was built on deep and serious commitment from many teachers to making their idea work. Leadership for the project emerged from the teachers who wanted to make the idea work and who took on extra work to experiment with the design and implementation.

Must Everyone Participate?

As might be expected, not all of the English teachers participated, or participated equally. Of the 14 English teachers, a group of five or six who had developed the clearest vision of the project acted as leaders in designing, explaining, and implementing the project. Five or six others were generally in favor of the project, but were less involved and more dependent on the judgment of others. Most of these teachers saw the first year's implementation as their opportunity to come to a more complete understanding of the project. One teacher who had not attended any of the planning meetings was against the project, explaining, "I guess I don't feel it's extremely

necessary." This teacher noted that the honors designation would not change the students' course grades, and colleges would not care about or understand the honors designations on the students' transcripts. Besides, he noted, AP classes were good for some kids and it had been a mistake to eliminate tracking.

During this first year of implementation, the department members who had participated in the design of the project and had become committed to it essentially ignored the one or two teachers who contributed little or did not participate. But those actively involved did not condemn the non-participants or attempt to force their participation. The feeling seemed to be that those who wanted to try it would do so, and the rest could wait and watch. Teachers who were involved noted that the others would be more likely to believe in the program after seeing it successfully implemented. Just as it was assumed that non-participating teachers from the department would be persuaded of the project's value based on demonstration during its first year, it was also assumed by some that parents would be equally persuaded, if not by the concept, then by the demonstration of the project.

Assuming that those not convinced of the value of the project would probably be persuaded by demonstrated success might be described as naive, but the assumption allowed room for some non-participation, decreasing the need for confrontation or forced conformity among department members. Thus the tentative nature of the first year of the program provided some teacher autonomy even though the majority of the department could move forward with its plan. The attitudes and practices enabled the department to act as a community, even as a community that accepted differences. The teachers believed that their approach also allowed them to put off confrontation with parents, assuming that the parents too would be content to wait and see how the project succeeded. This belief mirrored the teachers' own assumptions about the testing of new ideas during initial experience with them and learning from the process of doing.

Part of the process of innovation is reevaluation as an ongoing part of maintaining the project.

Final evaluations of the honors portfolio were conducted by a panel of university English faculty in late May. The teachers then held a final departmental meeting to consider the evaluators' suggestions and their own perceptions after the first year, and to consider modifications for the following year. Part of the process of innovation is reevaluation as an ongoing part of maintaining the project.

Innovation: Something Special?

In our case-study English department, innovation was seen by most of the teachers as a normal and expected part of their work, not as an added or unnecessary duty. Problem-solving in an environment of trial and change, and teacher learning, were expected aspects of their work as members of the department. Most of the English teachers also viewed their work within their individual classrooms as a part of the whole departmental program. Most felt a commitment to that program, which they had helped to construct. We also observed a commitment on the part of many individuals to the department group, a commitment influenced by a network of workplace friendships and mutual experiences.

At the beginning of our research we asked each member of the department for words to describe their department. Almost every member of this department used the word "collaborative." We think the scenario describing how the new idea of an honors portfolio emerged in the department captures the way in which these English teachers are collaborative: they relate socially and within those informal networks they talk professionally. They mutually accept the tasks of curriculum decision-making and pursue them actively and routinely, regarding innovation as important, fluid, and continuous.

The way this department developed its honors portfolio differs from other models of curricular change. Here, effective departmental innovations are not seen as individual responsibilities or accomplishments. Although we observed individuals implementing innovations alone in their own classrooms, these were not innovations that had the potential to affect the entire curriculum, the department, or a large group of students. Furthermore, effective departmental innovations are not seen as top-down orders issued by someone powerful outside the group. On the contrary, many department members view themselves as responsible for noting a need for change, for doing the research into issues and solutions, and for designing and implementing program-wide curriculum changes.

The Department and the Community

In many ways, the honors portfolio process reflects the portrait that current educational theory paints of professionally responsible curriculum development and change. Yet the result did not successfully satisfy parents in the ways that the English department members had hoped. One problem for the department may have been that the parents did not share the teachers' commitment to a relatively long time period to design and try out a new idea. The parents' thinking appeared to be more solution-driven than problem-solving.

The parent group also indicated its belief in a different model of curriculum development than the honors portfolio project demonstrates. A "Shared Decision-Making Model" was written and adopted by a group of the

parents and presented to the school board during the same year as the honors portfolio project. The parents' model delineates quite a different role for teachers involving curriculum construction and change. In it, classroom teachers are only to be implementers of curriculum designed by a different group, one consisting of a few representative parents, teachers, and administrators.

The parents' proposal may hint at a dilemma for a strong, innovative department that makes curriculum decisions according to the current best practices of the profession. We suggest that the working processes of strong English departments which efficiently take charge of the curriculum by innovative problem-solving and implementation are not automatically open to the participation of others. In this case, open participation with parents might well have inhibited innovation, since the parent group and the English teachers disagreed not only about the solution, but also about the fundamental roles each should play in the curriculum decision-making process. Finally, it is possible that change itself was perceived as threatening to some members of this parent group. Innovations are always threatening to those who liked things the way they used to be.

Change or innovation is sometimes stalled by saying "Let's not reinvent the wheel." But the belief that "there's nothing new under the sun" also inhibits innovation. As we confront new problems, we are reminded that innovation is intended to lead to solutions or improvements. In the case of the Mid-Valley High English Department's honors portfolio, innovation is both new and old at the same time, already invented and being invented. Good plans and innovative procedures are not fixed and eternal but fluid and changing; they are flexible resources for English departments as they, their students, and their communities face new challenges in our changing times. ●

A Classroom of Rote Learners or Critical Thinkers

by Mary Jane Reed, Solon High School, Solon, Ohio

Our profession is in the throes of change. The English teacher is emerging as a "generalist," a reading and writing teacher who uses literature as a vehicle to help students acquire critical thinking skills. The teacher-centered classroom of rote learners is becoming extinct. Some may oppose this movement, attacking authentic assessment or cooperative learning as fads, for high school teachers have been trained traditionally as content masters and disseminators of information. Yet I am convinced many will accept innovation if shown the difference between evaluation and assessment, between covering literature and teaching it, between assigning writing and teaching writing. This, then, is the most challenging role of the department chair today, to help colleagues through this paradigm shift, for change can be threatening.

Professional development programs are avenues that can chart a course for change or, at the very least, offer a means of self-evaluation for department members. Consultants from universities can provide fresh insight into the process approach to teaching—the writing process, the reading process, indeed, the learning process. For years the emphasis in education has been end-product evaluation. Essays are assigned, marked, and returned with comments. However, if true assessment is the goal, the emphasis will not be on the product but on the process, where teachers are aligned with students, intervening and conferencing during the rough-draft stages not only to designate "awkward" and "wordy" passages, but to show how to correct them. Over the past 20 years, writing as a process has been embraced and has proven to be a most effective, commonsense approach to teaching writing, yet many teachers still are not comfortable inculcating the process in the classroom. Brainstorming, drafts, revision: These become perfunctory exercises without consideration of the student's role as author or the teacher's role as facilitator. It is a process where students have ownership of their writing.

This emphasis on assessment has also affected how literature is taught. English teachers pride themselves in helping students comprehend facts, sequences, theme, but often in their haste to "cover" materials, lecturing becomes the mode instead of providing time and direction for students to explore uncharted options such as comparing and contrasting, constructing answers from deductive or inductive reasoning, taking risks to predict and evaluate. A classroom environment that promotes such learning skills is a student-centered classroom where anthologies do not dictate the curriculum and fewer literary selections may be taught. Undoubtedly this process approach is risky for teachers as well, for preconceived lesson plans can deteriorate rapidly in an arena of exploration where student interaction can determine outcome.

Professional development programs are avenues that can chart a course for change or, at the very least, offer a means of self-evaluation for department members.

One resource that can provide insightful approaches to instruction and assessment is *Dimensions of Learning*, developed by Robert

Marzano. These *DoL* teleconference sessions provide practical models of instruction that utilize critical thinking skills in both teaching and assessing, and encourage teachers to examine their effectiveness in the classroom. Incorporated within each session are dialogues with teachers who have applied these models successfully as demonstrated in the video segments of their classes in action.

Another source that can instill seeds of change is the work of Theodore R. Sizer and the Coalition of Essential Schools. Recognizing that the status quo is the problem in education today, Sizer creates a design for restructuring American education in his book *Horace's School: Redesigning the American High School*. Sizer presents guidelines that delineate the initial steps to launch an all-encompassing search for improvement, with emphasis throughout on "exhibitions," assessment projects that demonstrate student use of knowledge. Is it coincidence that the chair of the restructuring committee of the fictitious Franklin High is Horace, a veteran *English* teacher?

Once teachers begin to assess the effectiveness of their teaching, the realization will strike that self-evaluation is an ongoing process. Red flags will surface to signal not only how they teach but also why they teach the selections cited in their curriculum. At the very least these questions will haunt the most reluctant participants: Why are you teaching a particular work? What skill do you expect your students to master as a result of having studied it? Are you teaching for the development of that skill? Is your assessment aligned to your purpose? Most important, how will your students use knowledge, not merely display it? Professional development programs can provide teachers with the means to empower students in an active, energized learning environment where time is not an enemy and teaching less can accomplish more. ●

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Developing Leadership: An Innovative Writing Tutor Program

by Roger Ochse, Black Hills State University, Spearfish, South Dakota

When my division head notified me that the South Dakota Board of Regents wanted our department to initiate a pilot placement program, I really thought he was kidding. "No one," I told him, "could be less experienced than I to conduct such a program." I had been appointed only a year before, and then on an interim basis. My tenure-track job would begin only this coming fall. "Besides," I continued, "our department, you know, is divided between the 'old guard' and the 'new people.' It will be extremely difficult to get everyone working together." But our marching orders were already set in motion. I was reintroduced to the director of our Academic Skills Center and told about its program in supplemental instruction.

SI, as the program was known, came into the picture because (1) it would cause little or no disruption to our present way of teaching first-year English, and (2) it would involve no additional cost to the English department. As I studied the local program, I found that it was based on a successful model—already functioning in over 400 four-year and two-year colleges nationally—of peer tutoring. SI student leaders or tutors serve as "facilitators"—people who help others learn—rather than as "tutors" or "teachers" who dispense knowledge. SI leaders are trained to target all students and not only those at risk. They attend classes and complete assignments along with other students. Above all, they are caring individuals whose job is to help students construct their own knowledge and in the process succeed in the writing course. As I reviewed the literature, I found that participation in SI can significantly reduce course failure, improve average course grades, and reduce attrition. So we were embarking on a program with significant national results—if only we could validate these findings in our own department.

With its policy of open enrollment, Black Hills State University—like many other comprehensive and community higher education institutions—had been experiencing relatively high failure and attrition rates in its beginning writing class. Since 1982 the BHSU English faculty had observed the factors surrounding the failure and attrition among first-year students. In recent years as many as 40% of first-year students had not returned for their second year. English faculty had noted an apparently related trend in English 101 classes, as evidenced by absenteeism and by poor thinking, writing, and reading skills in as many as 25% of entering students. So now the questions posed for us were: What effect did SI have on student writing, course grades, failure, and attrition?

With less than six weeks before the start of the fall 1994 semester, we designed our departmental experiment. Of the 16 English 101 sections, five experimental sections were selected to participate in the pilot program, together with five control sections taught by the same instructors. Tutors regularly attended an experimental section of English 101 and participated in class activities

within boundaries established by each instructor. In addition, tutors met at the Academic Skills Center with students from their assigned class. A series of training sessions for tutors, conducted by English faculty, was held on a regular basis during the semester. Topics included: holistic scoring, revision, oral reading techniques, and sharing and responding methods.

To measure the effectiveness of the program, a diagnostic essay (EDE) was administered to 400 of 429 English 101 students, based on a common essay prompt and scored holistically by the entire English faculty. The prompt and resulting student essays were not subsequently discussed in class. The same diagnostic essay was administered at the end of the semester, making possible a comparison between scores in experimental, control, and remaining (non-participating) sections. Questionnaires were also given to participating students to obtain further data.

Our initial analysis of the demographic information on English 101 students was not encouraging. We examined this information for correlations between the first and second EDE score, ACT English scores, and percentile high school class rank. As I reviewed the evidence, I could not find any relationship between the EDE and other measures of student achievement. The research literature suggested a higher degree of correlation was possible, using the grade students received in the course. However, these data also did not present a significant correlation between the EDE scores and the grade students received in English 101 (0.24 and 0.41, respectively). Not only were these demographic data unreliable predictors of success in English 101, they offered limited insight into the potential effectiveness of the SI program.

We were more fortunate when our faculty examined the improvement in diagnostic essay scores from the beginning to the end of the semester. A significant difference in the improvement in EDE scores appeared between the experimental sections (those with tutors), the control sections (those without tutors taught by the same instructors), and the remaining sections (those without tutors and with non-SI participating instructors). The increases in scores were 15.7% (experimental) and 14.0% (control). Non-participating sections had a decrease in scores of 4.3%. Course grades were also significantly different in experimental (2.6/4.0), control (2.5/4.0), and non-participating (2.0/4.0) sections. The failure rates in experimental, control, and non-participating sections were 13.8%, 16.0%, and 21.0% respectively. Moreover, the attrition rate (those students dropping the course without taking a grade of F) was significantly different between experimental (6.1%), control (6.9%), and non-participating (9.3%) sections. We therefore concluded that supplemental instruction can help students improve writing skills, raise grades, reduce failure, and lower attrition.

This enhanced teamwork among faculty has spread into other areas of departmental work, including reaccreditation and college catalog planning.

What happened on the human level confirmed these findings. During the semester, tutors reported that students in experimental sections had better access to a tutor and felt less hesitant about asking for assistance than students enrolled in other sections. These reports were confirmed through survey instruments completed by students at semester's end. Some instructors mandated minimum meetings between students and tutors. Other faculty used tutors to work with individuals and/or groups with specific writing problems. These intensive interventions appeared to have a positive effect on student attitudes, attendance, and performance.

From a leadership perspective, our experiment with SI was even more important. While our research project was not really discovering anything new, it was having a significant impact on our English department. The five faculty directly involved with experimental writing sections were now *talking* about writing, and planning changes for the ways English 101 and 102 classes were taught. The senior faculty, most of whom were not directly involved in the study, did volunteer to score diagnostic essays and participated in discussion of the results. This enhanced teamwork among faculty has spread into other areas of departmental work, including reaccreditation and college catalog planning. Other benefits of the SI program included: enhanced opportunities for faculty–tutor collaboration; experimentation with classroom teaching approaches; and talking about writing among faculty and students. Newer faculty members seemed to be more fully integrated into the life of the department, and there appeared to be more substantial dialogue between all department members.

When it was time to submit our report to the Board of Regents, we were able to recount a successful project whose findings validated the research already done on supplemental instruction. SI helped students improve their writing skills, as measured by the EDE, in first-year writing courses. Students enrolled in SI sections had significantly higher improvements in EDE scores, significantly higher grades, significantly lower failure, and significantly lower attrition. We concluded that SI can be an important tool in helping students succeed in beginning college writing courses.

Perhaps even more important, we were able to report the cooperation of our colleagues—not only in the study, but in our plans for the future. We proposed that SI be continued beyond the pilot program, subject to funding.

Three options emerged: expansion to all English 101 sections (full funding); continuation of the pilot program (partial funding); and a return to the status quo prior to the program (no funding). We could report that for all three program options, our entire departmental faculty was committed to continuing to study the writing problems of our students and to explore ways to improve instruction. Whichever option might be chosen, the department will administer diagnostic essays, score them holistically, and relate these data to the SI scores from the previous year. Alternative modes, including student writing portfolios, are now being discussed as a means of assessing student writings over time. A renewed writing emphasis is being initiated in literature classes, from first-year through graduate courses. New courses in advanced and imaginative writing have been introduced to the curriculum. A faculty development grant from the Bush Foundation has enabled the SI core group to visit other college and university campuses, attend writing conferences, and study the feasibility of a writing center. Their recommendations will have a lasting impact on the writing program. Many problems remain—funding, class size, technological support, faculty recruitment and retention, to name a few—but we are at least working together toward more clear and attainable objectives.

A colleague at a sister institution asked me, "How did you manage to get such cooperation from your faculty?" Then I realized what had made our study work. It was the leadership assumed by every member of our department—each in his or her own way—that turned our project into a success. Whether it was training tutors, analyzing data, offering criticisms of the research design, scoring diagnostic essays, editing draft reports—every faculty member participated. We are now a much more cohesive and collegial department. Whatever direction our project may take in the future, I believe we will work together in the best interests of our students, department, and profession. ●

The Search: One Teacher's Journey

by Jane Pope, Lovington High School, Lovington, New Mexico

It began when a friend, Teresa, told me, "You have to take possession of what you teach; you must own it, believe in it, you must make it happen for your students." With these words my challenge, my responsibility, my search was set in motion.

Self-doubt appeared in my high school classroom the previous year when it became apparent through student participation, worksheets, tests, and writing skills that there was little to no carry-over from grammar activities. In essence I saw, for my students, no point to the traditional teaching of grammar, no point to the excessive amounts of time spent on grammar exercises. "Have I wasted my education, my time," I began to wonder. Then Teresa's statement began to make sense. It meant I must own the process by which I teach grammar; I must believe in it.

My journey and the search for solutions began through participation in the High Plains Writing Project (Eastern New Mexico University, June 1994). It was there that I was introduced to Nancie Atwell's *In the Middle*, in which she proposed using grammar and literature books as resources, rather than as gospel texts. This was a totally revolutionary idea to me. Atwell also stated that the only way students could improve reading and writing skills was to spend time reading and writing. This surely is not a radical concept, but rather the application of common sense.

Atwell could use this approach, I believed, because she had the luxury of teaching reading and writing in two separate time periods. Scheduling such as this had never occurred at our high school, where reading had become a side issue next to the subjects of grammar, literature, vocabulary, and when there was time, writing. All of these skills took place in a 42-minute period. To cover such a contingency, Atwell suggested that three consecutive days be chosen for sustained writing. This would give time to students for ideas to simmer slowly, to solidify into a story. On the other two days, literature or reading could be addressed. "Could this work in my school?" I wondered. "How would the administration feel about this type of wholesale change?" I pondered the effects on students, on me, on my colleagues in the English department, and on my evaluator, the principal.

In an effort to find answers, I continued on to my next assigned reading, *Grammar and the Teaching of Writing* by Rei Noguchi. Immediately came validation: Traditional grammar instruction was not helping the majority of students. He told of research that showed traditional grammar has very little effect upon student writing skills, and that, consequently, to increase or strengthen writing skills, "we need to change, or modify, our grammar teaching methods." I had to agree.

By replacing traditional, whole-class grammar instruction, I have discovered that individualized grammar lessons within the structure of a student's own writing produces a greater learning potential.

Next, I strayed from the required reading and broached a subject I had avoided—portfolios. In Kathleen Blake Yancey's compilation of essays, *Portfolios in the Writing Classroom*, I began to see their purpose more clearly. Since writing is a process, one purpose is to build upon preexisting

skills which can be observed by the collection of student writing. If student writing, in all its phases, is saved in a notebook, a portfolio, then both teacher and student could refer back to it. Then, a piece of writing written prior to a teacher–student conference could be used as clarification. In this way, it would be possible to see development and areas of need.

Another point with which I had to come to terms was the traditional grading system, which would continue in our school district. Within this grading system, progress reports and nine-week grades would appear with regularity. Knowing this requirement raised the question on what to base grades; what standard to use? Should I develop one that defined an *A, B,* etc.? Because I think proper grammar usage and punctuation important, should it be based upon that criteria? Would this lead to inequities? Along with Atwell, "fairness to my students as an evaluator is my goal" (114). Therefore, as the evaluator, I decided I would feel more comfortable with an assigned point system for those items necessary for a passing grade, such as content, mechanics, risk-taking, while a weekly participation grade would be added. In that way, bias, I hoped, could be cut to a minimum.

With the support of the administration, the reading/writing workshop became a reality. Now, if the principal walks by my classroom, he would likely see two boys quietly conferring in the corner of the room, with other students busy scribbling away on sheets of paper filled with closely packed lines. Whispers, even a few quiet laughs, might drift across the room as the struggle toward authorship develops. The reading/writing workshop, then, has become an effective teaching method in the secondary classroom. By replacing traditional, whole-class grammar instruction, I have discovered that individualized grammar lessons within the structure of a student's own writing produces a greater learning potential.

After more than a semester of using the reading/writing workshop with my students, I have seen more benefits for student learning than ever before. In the three consecutive days a week students write, they excavate their imagination which they unconsciously buried when puberty struck. Almost unknowingly, through use their writing skills improve. Secondly, not only do they mine their imaginations but in the process become better acquainted with themselves. One of the most "jump out and notice me" rewards is the creativity that abounds. This often comes from the unexpected student such as a sophomore girl, Margaret Alba, who wrote:

The girl at the back
In the classroom
there is always
a girl
who sits
at the back
she barely smiles
sometimes
I tell her "hi"
Other times
I just ignore her
But!
Most of the time
I am her.

It is in this setting that students first see themselves beyond their mirrored image. When this step toward personal discovery is taken, the validation of the writing workshop happens. With each piece of writing an individualized editing skill, at most two skills, are addressed. Rather than overwhelming a student with too much to learn at one time, grammar can be understood and through use internalized. Within this context students learn and adapt to the process which undergirds written communication, the writing process. Each draft builds commitment and understanding. Finally, when students feel they are ready to submit a draft, many of the previous writing problems have disappeared. Then, the work is ready for a fellow writer, the teacher, to narrow concentration to one or two additional problems.

The journey begun alone in June 1994 has been joined by students, and together we work to overcome insecurities about writing as we stretch into undiscovered country. On this path new thoughts, new sounds, new characters march beside us toward the discovery of poetry, plays, parodies, persuasive writing, short stories, and narratives. Now, the fulfillment allowed to facilitators of learning comes. Finally, I have concrete evidence of learning. I am able to keep faith with the implicit promise students accept when they sit down in my classroom the first day of school. ●

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A Technology Happening Touches the Future

by Susan Smith, Andover, Massachusetts

"And this is my favorite book!" I proclaimed to my eighth-grade literature classes, as I introduced them to an array of intriguing children's books that filled many memory pockets of my life. I shared these treasures with my students as we embarked on an adventure together which would link language arts skills, specifically story

structure and writing, to technology.

Subsequent to reading and discussing a variety of adolescent novels and other literature together, we considered the specific ingredients for successful story writing. We defined and discussed each ingredient of the story map and considered additional story elements, such as tone and structure. The students then formed cooperative groups to begin writing their own children's books. Sounds like a good lesson plan, doesn't it? However, the truly exciting component had not yet begun.

Enter the Macintosh computer, the Hypercard program, and the scanner. After completing the content for their stories, the groups proceeded to the computer room. There they received instruction from a technology facilitator in how to use the Hypercard program to render their electronic books, which would be shared with elementary schoolchildren at a future time.

As a novice using the computer in my language arts classroom, I entered the computer room with trepidation. Soon, however, I witnessed an incredible transformation in the classroom. An abundance of enthusiasm, excitement, and involvement of students evolved as the students began to utilize the Hypercard program and the scanner to create their books. All discipline challenges disappeared, and cooperative learning groups worked together to select what would best suit their book content. Students even voluntarily appeared after school to work on their project. Critical and creative thinking skills repeatedly surfaced, such as decision-making, categorizing, classifying, substituting, magnifying, and minifying, to mention just a few, as the students used technology to begin to weave their text into a finished product utilizing the varied clip art and other technological tools available to them.

Students became animated as they completely immersed themselves in their efforts, and they proved eager to share their progress on a daily basis with me. Their interest level in language arts and technology peaked to heights I had not observed in my classroom for some time—a wave of the future had begun to surface. In amazement, I watched their youthful faces glued to the computer screen, and I heard their "oohs" and "ahs" as they glimpsed and captured just the right fonts and illustrations for their creations.

As each cooperative group reached project completion, our technology facilitator exclaimed with enthusiasm, "By the way, we can add sound and animation to your books, too!" And a whole new wave of enthusiasm began to roll. There is so much to learn, but learning is not tedious or uncomfortable, it is exciting. All participants have become voracious in their interest, and I realize I need to learn more. Not only have I witnessed a fine interdisciplinary happening occur in my classroom, but I also believe I touched the future with my teaching. ●

Call for Book Manuscripts

Manuscript proposals are being solicited for a National Council of Teachers of English proposed three-volume series, to be entitled *Classroom Voices: Issues in Teaching about Genocide and Intolerance*. The volumes will focus on elementary school (K–5), middle school (6–8), and secondary school (9–12) teaching experiences.

Focus of the manuscript would be experiences and ideas from teachers and teacher educators in K–12 English language arts classrooms on teaching about intolerance—bigotry, racism, prejudice, discrimination, sexism, homophobia, or violence in any of its forms—and/or genocide. Relevant research results are welcome.

The editors are interested in essays which show, don't tell; which contain teacher and student voices; which provide classroom descriptions of challenges and/or successes in dealing with the topic; and research results which address means of teaching this material.

Proposals must include author's name, address, and telephone (with e-mail address and fax number, if available); tentative article title; and 2–3 pages summary of the proposed article. Submit 5 copies of the proposal; deadline for submissions is December 1, 1995.

Guidelines for finished articles will be furnished upon acceptance of the proposal.

Send elementary school proposals to: Dr. Judith Robertson, Faculty of Education, 145 Jean-Jacques Lussier Blvd., Ottawa, K1N 6N5, Canada.

Send middle school proposals to: Dr. Rose Rudnitski, State University of New York at New Paltz, 75 S. Manheim Blvd., New Paltz, NY 12561-2499.

Send secondary school proposals to: Carol Danks, Roosevelt High School, 7347 Westview, Kent, OH 44240. ●

The New Circles of Learning: Cooperation in the Classroom and School by David W. Johnson, Roger T. Johnson, and Edythe Johnson Holubec (ASCD, 1994).

by Barbara King-Shaver, South Brunswick Schools, New Jersey

At first glance, the latest text from these three well-known leaders in cooperative learning may seem redundant. Much of this information on cooperative learning has been written about by the Johnsons and Holubec elsewhere (see especially *Circles of Learning: Cooperation in the Classroom,* ASCD, 1989). This new book, however, expands on their previous work by discussing how cooperative learning can and should move beyond the classroom into the school and the school district.

The book begins with an overview of what is meant by cooperative learning and presents a concise review of the theories and research on which cooperative learning is based, including an overview of social independence theory and behavioral learning theory. Chapter 3 reviews the five essential components of cooperative learning that have come to be associated with the work of Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec: positive independence, face-to-face promotive interaction, individual accountability, interpersonal and small-group skills, and group processing.

Several chapters offer a useful discussion of the differences between formal and informal cooperative learning. Included are specific instructions to classroom teachers on how to use both formal and informal cooperative learning; for example, the authors share strategies for establishing groups. These strategies include asking students to list three classmates with whom they would like to work. By comparing lists, teachers can see which students are isolated, and teachers can then "build a group of supportive students around each isolated student" (p. 38). Hints for the classroom such as this one appear throughout the text.

Chapter 9 includes more information on "Cooperation and Conflict" than the authors have previously presented. Important steps are offered that teachers can use to help students resolve their own conflicts. These include: state what you want, state what you feel, state the reasons for your wants and feelings, summarize your understanding of what the other person wants and feels and the reasons underlying both, invent three optional plans to resolve the conflict, and choose one of the plans and shake hands. This chapter can be helpful to those involved in the increasing number of peer mediation programs in our schools.

A significant addition this book makes to the field of cooperative learning comes in Chapters 10 and 11. These two chapters succinctly present an argument for expanding cooperative learning beyond the classroom into the school and school district. In addition to looking at the way the paradigm of teaching is changing from a teacher-delivery model to a student-interactive model, the authors describe in detail how the cooperative classroom is the starting point for collegial teaching teams, cooperative faculty meetings, and school-based decision making. Emphasis is on achieving quality education by including teachers working cooperatively in the decision-making processes of the building and the district. Specific suggestions include using task forces as well as ad hoc decision-making groups: "Task forces diagnose a problem, gather data about the causes and extent of the problem, consider a variety of alternative solutions, make conclusions, and present recommendations to the faculty as a whole" (p. 90). Ad hoc groups are formed after the whole group listens to a problem and then breaks down into smaller groups to discuss the problem as well as possible solutions to it. After ad hoc group discussions, the faculty meets again as a whole to share the groups' suggestions. The authors' suggestions on ways to use cooperative learning in building and district decision making remind this reviewer of site-based management practices.

Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec emphasize the interrelatedness of cooperative learning in the classroom and in the school community as a whole. Teachers who understand cooperative learning in their classes are able to use it when participating in school and district meetings; conversely, when teachers use cooperative learning strategies themselves in school and district meetings, they are better able to implement these procedures in their classrooms. In addition, the current focus on school-based or site-based management is supported by the authors' discussion of the cooperative school.

The New Circles of Learning presents a succinct review of the basic tenets of cooperative learning and its classroom applications. In addition, it expands on these principles by offering suggestions on how the whole school community can be structured on the principles of cooperative learning. For teachers who are new to cooperative learning, this book offers a good introduction; to teachers who are implementing cooperative learning in their classrooms, this book offers a good review of theory and practices and presents some new research that supports their work; for school administrators and the public, this book offers thoughtful arguments about the application of cooperative learning on the building and district level. ●

CEL Sets Convention Dates

This year's convention of the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) will be held in San Diego November 20–22, *after* the NCTE convention's concurrent sessions, instead of before the NCTE event. "The 1995 timetable should be a greater convenience to attendees," according to Don Stephan, CEL Chair, "because it provides a smooth transition from the weekend of the NCTE convention." The theme for this year's CEL Convention is "Leadership for Lifelong Learning." It will include a variety of leadership-oriented sessions and other events.

Registration materials for CEL were included with the NCTE Convention *Preview*, mailed to NCTE members in late August. You also can request CEL and Annual Convention information from NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096. ●

CEL Convention Speakers

Quincy Troupe
Poet & creative writing and literature professor, University of California, San Diego

Ginger Hovanic
Principal, Clear View Elementary School, Chula Vista, California

Carol Booth Olson
Director, University of California at Irvine Writing Project

Robert Anderson
Playwright

Robert Infantino
Teacher educator, University of San Diego

1995 CEL Election Slate: Candidates for Member-at-Large

Four candidates are running for two positions of CEL Member-at-Large.

JOHN BARBER, English Department Chair, Fairmount-Harford High School, Baltimore, MD; Minority Affairs Coordinator, Maryland Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts. **Formerly:** People of Color Committee, 1991–94; Rainbow Strand Convention Planner, 1991–94. **Member:** NCTE, CEL, ASCD. **Program Participant:** NCTE and CEL convention participant, 1986–95; CEL Program Committee, 1991.

Position Statement: A smooth transition into the 21st century requires teaching for lifelong learning. Therefore, every English/language arts educator's major objectives should be to teach for understanding and to help all students find success in the classroom, in school, and in life. Teaching for understanding and success enables the students to become empowered to see themselves not only as lifelong learners who are active inquirers, experimenters, problem solvers, and productive citizens, but also as theorizers who are able to read, write, and reflect on texts from multiple perspectives. As the leaders and members of CEL continue to maintain the long tradition of educational excellence, hope continues to be alive.

BARBARA LUTKENHAUS, English teacher and Department Chair, Somers Central Schools, Somers, NY. **Formerly:** CEL Hospitality Chair, 1993, 1994. **Member:** WCEE, NYSEC, CEL, RASA, NCTE, Phi Delta Kappa, Library Trustee. **Publications:** Articles in *Journal of Invitational Education, Ideas Plus.* **Program Participant:** Presenter and session chair, CEL and NCTE.

Position Statement: I became a department chair because of CEL. It's not simply a valuable professional organization, it's an inspiration, a source of information, a vehicle for change and growth, and a family of educators with similar interests and concerns. Through CEL, we are all more aware, informed, organized, committed, and visible. Because of CEL, we've been on the "cutting edge" of national trends in leadership styles, detracking, censorship, integrating multicultural and YA literature into the canon, changing schedules, portfolios, authentic assignments and assessment, cooperative learning, the Standards movement, etc., during an exciting era of educational reform. It's vital for us to get our message out—to let more of our colleagues know that we're here and that we have much to offer them. I'd like to play a leadership role in this process and pledge to do all I can to keep CEL strong and vital as we evolve to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

VICTOR JACCARINO, Chairperson of English, Herricks Schools, New Hyde Park, NY; Secretary, New York State English Council; Past President, Long Island Language Arts Council. **Formerly:** High school teacher of English; Program Chair, NYSEC; President, LILAC. **Member:** NCTE, CEL, ASCD, LILAC. **Publications:** *English Journal, NYSEC News, LILAC Newsletter.* **Program Participant:** CEL, NCTE, NYSEC, LILAC.

Position Statement: "What do you do for a living?" "I am a teacher."

NCTE Name Change

Throughout NCTE's history, there have been periodic attempts by different groups within the Council to generate interest in changing our organizational name. The concern centers on the idea that our national identity as "Teachers of English" may be too narrow to convey who we really are in terms of our profession's comprehensive role in guiding the development of students' reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking skills.

In 1990, a proposal to change the name of NCTE resulted from a Sense of the House Motion passed at the Board of Directors meeting in Atlanta. According to records, the discussion at that time focused on such issues as the need to reflect international concerns and elementary teachers' sense of identification with the Council. This year, for many of the same reasons stated above, the NCTE Executive Committee has requested that we revisit this issue.

Letters concerning an NCTE name change should be addressed to: NCTE Name Change, NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096. ●

NCTE Name Change Response Sheet

I support:

_____ No name change.

_____ No name change, but suggest adding this clarifying subtitle: _____

_____

Examples from other organizations:

The National Association of Secondary School Principals: *Serving* All *Leaders in Middle Level and High School Education*; or, ARTS-US: *Cultural Arts Collaboration for Education*

_____ The following name change: _____

_____

That's what I do. I teach kids. As a department chair, I have the unique opportunity to affect more kids by working with teachers on curriculum and pedagogy. Conferences, participation in professional organizations, and preparing workshops help me bring ideas for kids back to my department. At district meetings, I help discover what is good for kids. As a teacher, my goal is to create lovers of reading and writing. As a Member-at-Large for CEL, my single goal would be to help teachers improve language arts education for all students. CEL has helped me to be a better educator through publications, conferences, and collegiality. I hope that I can give something back to the group by sharing what I have learned from this organization, my state affiliate, local affiliate, the teachers with whom I work, and, yes, my own classroom.

WANDA PORTER, English Department Head and teacher, Kamehameha Secondary School, Hawaii; Program Chair, 1995 CEL Convention; Chair, CEL Commission on Leadership in Independent Schools. **Formerly:** Co-chair, Hawaii Association of Independent Schools Statewide Teachers Conference, 1994; reviewer, *English Journal*; President, Hawaii Association for Gifted Children. **Member:** NCTE, CEL, IRA, ASCD. **Publications:** Articles in *HAIS Independent Issues*. **Awards:** Representative to Governor's Conference on Children and Youth. **Program Participant:** NCTE, CEL, HAIS, others.

Position Statement: I believe that CEL's role is to foster leadership at all levels and to empower individuals to achieve their highest potential in whatever capacity they may serve as leader. Many challenges face educators as we prepare for the 21st century. CEL must play an important role in shaping and supporting tomorrow's English/language arts leadership. My association with CEL members and programs for nearly 10 years has made me feel part of a network that supports my efforts to provide leadership, that fosters the growth of the next generation of leaders, and that advocates for improved conditions for all teachers and learners in English education. It would be an honor and a pleasure to repay what has come to me through service to CEL as a Member-at-Large.

1995 CEL Ballot

The CEL Bylaws permit members to vote either by mail or at the CEL business session of the annual fall convention. Each member mailing a ballot should mark it and mail it in an envelope with a **return name and address** to: Willa Mae Kippes, Valley High School, P.O. Box 156, Gilcrest, CO 80623.

Ballots must be postmarked **no later than November 1, 1995.** Members who prefer to vote at the convention will be given a ballot and an envelope at the business session of CEL. An institution with membership may designate one individual as the representative to vote on its behalf. Please list the institution name and address on the outside of the envelope.

Members-at-Large (vote for two)

- ❑ John Barber
- ❑ Barbara Lutkenhaus
- ❑ Victor Jaccarino
- ❑ Wanda Porter
- ❑ _____ (write-in candidate)

Call for Manuscripts—Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly*, a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500–5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

Recent surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

February 1996 (October 15, 1995, deadline)
Blueprints for Integrating the English Curriculum

May 1996 (January 31 deadline)
Connections: The Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment Link

October 1996 (June 15 deadline)
Humor and Laughter

Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Henry Kiernan, Editor, *English Leadership Quarterly*, West Morris Regional High School District, Administration Building, Four Bridges Road, Chester, NJ 07930; phone 908-879-6404, ext. 278; fax 908-879-8861; e-mail <kiernan@planet.net>. ●

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▶ IN THIS ISSUE

Authentic Assessment

by Henry Kiernan, editor

Imagine engaging in a dialogue with Plato. In the midst of probing questions, discussion, and searching for the answer, imagine Plato asking his student to mark a bubble with a No. 2 pencil. While we know that academic achievement can be measured in many ways, we also are keenly aware that the public measures schools by the results of standardized tests. The multiple-choice exam is still the prime choice for states that conduct statewide testing.

After decades of "test-wiseness" drills and ensuring that standardized tests do not "drive the curriculum," teachers are questioning the demand for high performance on tests designed more for the ease with which they can be scored than for the quality with which they can evaluate student ability. Authentic assessment allows for thorough preparation and demonstration of knowledge. It focuses on the student's ability to justify answers and to produce a quality product and/or performance. Teachers who use portfolios and performance-based tasks support how these measures simulate situations authentic to the demands of the discipline of English.

As this issue's contributors demonstrate, English teachers are finding that authentic assessment increases enthusiasm and professional renewal. Yet this work demands an enormous commitment of time for planning, training, observing, and evaluating. With the dramatic assessment reforms occurring in many schools, several questions remain: How do we move from standards to assessment? How do we prepare parents and the community for new kinds of assessment? What measures of validity and reliability can be applied to authentic assessment? What is the role of traditional testing approaches?

Schools must be communities where there is ongoing discussion of the central issues of quality, equity, goals, expectations, and differences. Designing tests worth taking and measures worth making deserves careful consideration, cautious implementation, and consistent evaluation. ●

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Classrooms as Communities of Writers

by Nancy L. Hadaway, University of Texas at Arlington

Writing instruction still focuses on drill and practice with composition at the sentence or paragraph level (Center for the Study of Writing, 1991). Furthermore, we tend to believe that "effective writing is simply an artifact of mastering sufficient skills and plugging them into a prescribed form through a sequence of writerlike actions (prewriting, writing, revising, editing)" (Farnan, Lapp, & Flood, 1992, p. 551). Our skills-oriented instruction, however, is in direct opposition to the reality of the students' world after graduation—a world where writing tasks focus on

authentic topics and processes such as decision making and collaboration among peers.

Deciding that change begins with me, I launched a collaborative writing project with my university class four years ago. My goal was to move closer toward creating a community of learners, and most important, a community of writers. In publishing a class book, I wanted students to fully experience the writing process, to feel ownership of an idea, and to make major shifts in their behavior (Farnan, Lapp, & Flood, 1992). Four years and four volumes later, our story furnishes information which hopefully will spur teachers at the secondary and the university levels to incorporate similar ideas into their classrooms.

Getting Started

As an introduction to collaborative writing at the beginning of the semester, classes view an NCTE/ASCD video, *Snake Hill to Spring Bank*, which is a depiction of a "Foxfire" type (Wigginton, 1991/1992) project. The video shows a senior English class reaching out into the community, contacting local figures, and interviewing them about the region. From the information gathered, the class publishes a volume of local history. Through this collaborative technique, students are immersed in listening, speaking, reading, and writing as well as in the critical thinking and problem solving needed for the myriad of editing and publishing decisions which must be made.

After viewing the video, we discuss the possibility of such a collaborative writing process. Initially, students are anxious and overwhelmed by the prospect of collecting information, sifting through a multitude of data, and then writing, editing, and publishing an entire book in one brief semester, but the novelty of the idea and the appeal of the potential product pushes them forward.

As a first step in our journey, we brainstorm possibilities for the project. Standing at the board as a scribe, I record students' suggestions for possible topics of interest. At this point, we are simply generating ideas with no judgments made about the feasibility or the attractiveness of the topics. In the past, the options have ranged from academic topics, such as a history of the university or the diverse perspectives on a specific university incident, to popular themes that would be inherently interesting to students, such as media trends or teen issues. Each topic is written on the board with clarification as needed.

Next, we move to the valuing phase where we debate each topic for its merits. Is the topic too narrow for a book-length project? Will there be enough potential informants to interview about the different aspects of the topic? Could a particular topic be combined with another idea suggested? After much deliberation and compromise, the class members rank their top three choices (five points for their first choice, three points for second, one point for third). These results are tabulated and reported, and we pause for more clarification and some friendly persuasion in support of each of our top three picks. Finally, we proceed with the first choice or have a runoff for two closely ranked topics.

The first year, the class chose to focus on *Teens, Their Fears and Frustrations*. Using that book as an example, the second year, students voted to explore *Teens: Issues and Solutions* in order to move a step beyond just documenting teen issues and to provide needed information and suggest possible solutions for the difficulties teens face. The third year, in *Visions Beyond 2000*, students took a futuristic look at what individuals predicted for the next century in the areas of careers, global issues, technology, and changing values. Most recently, we completed a volume entitled *Our Changing Times*, which documents the changes over the last few decades in families, health, leisure activities, and careers.

Moving Forward

With one decision down, many others still await. The book's topic must be focused to provide direction to the project. Many important questions evolve at this stage which help the enterprise take shape. For instance, during the first year, we had to decide

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on our parameters for teens, fears, and frustrations. Who would we interview? Only teens? What other perspectives were needed? And how would we select informants?

The answers to these beginning issues took us to the next stage in planning, refining the project further.

> *Recognizing when to assist and when to allow students to struggle with particular issues has been my challenge.*

Because some class members felt the predictions and perspectives of youngsters approaching their teen years could prove interesting, we included teens and preteens, grades 5–12, in our interview sample. Next, the central theme of fears and frustrations was widened to include the positive dimensions of teens' hopes and expectations as well.

As a technique for balancing the information emerged, the class discussed the means of selecting informants, the number of people to interview, and the demographics of the sample of informants (age, gender, ethnicity, and geographic background). We discussed how each of these decisions would shape the information collected and the slant within our book. I was amazed at the complexity of the issues that arose and the solutions that students proposed.

The last decision in the planning stage shaped the format of the book. Feeling that a multifaceted look at teens' fears and frustrations would include input not only from teens but also from adults, the class brainstormed and eventually selected three angles to pursue: teens, parents, and community professionals working with teens. After discussing the three perspectives selected for the text, class members volunteered for their particular area of interest. Thus, the class was divided into three collaborative writing groups of approximately ten students, each contributing one chapter to the joint effort.

From this first experience, I discovered the difficulties with large groups. Sometimes the progress was very slow because of the difficulty of reaching a consensus with a larger group. Based on my observations, I believe that collaborative writing works best in smaller groups of four to six, a size that seems to provide enough support to divide and share the responsibilities of the larger task without blocking progress. So, with each book topic in the past three years, we have been careful to choose a subject area which can be subdivided into four to six areas of interest or chapters, thus allowing for small collaborative writing partnerships to develop.

Writing in Collaboration

Throughout the semester a part of each class period is devoted to the project. Within their book chapter groups, students decide on the number of individual contacts they will make, generate questions for surveys or for interviews, and create a timeline for conducting research and interviews and reporting the results to the group. By this point, it is evident that we have experienced a crucial shift from a typical, teacher-directed classroom (Knudson, 1990). Instead, the *students* have become responsible for making assignments, setting timelines, and constructing information for themselves (Tabachnick, 1992).

Students soon return to their groups with some research and interview data in hand, ready to discuss and eager to begin the process of writing their sections. Quickly, they discover the many difficulties ahead: sorting through the mass of information, deciding what to include and what to delete, merging the different writing styles of group members, communicating and problem solving among participants, learning to work together, and handling the diverse personalities within a group setting (Cintorino, 1993b; Ljung, Szedeli, & Guth, 1993). However, "the opportunity for learning is increased enormously if students are allowed to make meaning for themselves, among themselves" (Cintorino, 1993a, p. 31).

Writing in collaboration is not an easy task; often group members block progress through their own actions (i.e., excluding members through cliquish behaviors, not meeting deadlines, obstructing group decisions). At times, I attempt to facilitate by refocusing the group on their task. Recognizing when to assist and when to allow students to struggle with particular issues has been *my* challenge; I have learned "to let students be accountable for their own investigation and inquiry" (Sorenson, 1993).

As writing progresses, revising and editing decisions surface. The collaborative writing groups function as peer-response groups. They "cluster in small groups to read and listen to one another's work, critiquing and providing valuable insights to writers who are too close to their own work" (Farnan, Lapp, & Flood, 1992, p. 553). Students read and critique the section as it evolves and contribute their expertise to the task of shaping the text into final form. Finally, students begin to share text across groups for final editing concerns.

Pulling the Text Together

While the individual sections of the book move forward with groups writing chapter introductions and conclusions and brainstorming potential chapter titles, the class also begins to grapple with issues beyond each group's responsibility. Pairs and smaller subgroups are chosen to write a preface, introduction, and conclusion to the book, to decide on the order of the chapters within the book, and to design the title page. Using computer resources, individual sections are typed and saved to disk, and students use graphics programs to generate the cover and title page as well as chapter dividers. Using

other books as models, cartoons, drawings, and quotes are used for transitions between sections and to give the book a more professional look. Finally, after much heated debate, the class titles their book and chooses the cover color.

Closing the Book and Evaluating Our Journey

What materialized from the class effort that first year was a 90-page book in three chapters. Teens' fears and frustrations, hopes and dreams were embodied through research, quotes, personal narratives, and summaries of interviews from parents, community professionals, and teens themselves. While the book was a concrete indication of our work, the other part of the journey, growth and self-confidence in writing, was also evident.

Beyond the text of the book and observing the students work in their collaborative writing groups, I use a contract and self-assessment procedure for evaluating this project. Early in the project, after some group discussion and negotiation, each student submits a written contract detailing what their individual contributions will be to the group effort, i.e., number of survey questions, number of people interviewed, distribution of surveys, number of sources of research information, typing responsibilities, and any individual work on the introduction or conclusion for that chapter. I keep these contracts until the end of the project and then return them to students along with a self-assessment. Students then have the opportunity to evaluate their own work on the project and assess whether or not they successfully completed their original commitments as well as comment on what they learned, on their group members, and on the group effort as a whole. Student comments on their self-assessments have been insightful and demonstrate how such projects can alter students' perceptions toward writing.

Students in a Learning Community

The students' roles change dramatically in a collaborative classroom. They learn that "real writing has real consequences. It is purposeful, with content and context which are meaningful to the writer" (Farnan, Lapp, & Flood, 1992, p. 555). As can be seen from our story, students discover that writing is an interactive process, there are "no formulas" (Farnan, Lapp, & Flood, 1992, p. 555). Collaborative enterprises are designed by the participants, from the bottom up; and, most important, the responsibility at each phase rests with the members of the learning community, not with the instructor (Stasz, Schwartz, & Weeden, 1991). Students learn to teach each other, to express opinions and to listen to other's ideas, to support each other, to make decisions, to read and write for meaningful purposes. Perhaps the most powerful lesson which my students will take with them is the realization that "we rarely learn to read or process print in a neat, sequential order—it is a much messier process than that" (Stasz, Schwartz, & Weeden, 1991). How contrary this understanding is to their expectations on first entering the class.

This project helped me get out of my students' way and allow them the freedom to explore.

Teachers in a Learning Community

Even more changes are in store for the teacher in a collaborative classroom. I have long believed with a growing number of others (Sorenson, 1993; Tabachnick, 1992) that when students construct their own meaning rather than turning to me for all the answers, they actually learn more and at a deeper level of understanding and commitment. This project helped me get out of my students' way and allow them the freedom to explore. Initially, the students were sometimes angry and frustrated with me for not being a director, for not stepping in and telling them what to do. They moved past this point, however, and as I took on my new role of group monitor (Bransford & Vye, 1989), I was allowed to become a participant in the project, sitting with groups and listening to them debate how to proceed and how to consolidate the information. At times, the students would still ask for input, and occasionally I would provide answers, but more often I simply offered questions to prompt their group's decision-making process.

Conclusion

One teen noted in an interview for our first book that his greatest frustration was "doing monotonous English work and reading meaningless stories." Certainly projects such as these could help him tap into his writing ability in a manner that is neither monotonous nor meaningless. My students begin these projects with some anxiety and skepticism. The objective of learning more about a topic of interest is their hook. They accomplish their original goal and much more—designing surveys, interviewing people, making countless decisions about writing, and working as a group. We learn that "writing is an affective as well as a cognitive process" (Farnan, Lapp, & Flood, 1992, p. 555). We move beyond just teaching and learning concepts such as the writing process and peer editing; we really live them. ●

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Portfolios in the Classroom: Research and Experience

by Thomas W. Jones, Wyoming Valley West High School, Plymouth, Pennsylvania

In August 1991, I attended the Secondary Section Summer Institute at San Francisco State University sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English. One of the presenters was Tom Romano of Utah State University and the author of *Clearing the Way: Working with Teenage Writers.* As part of his presentation, Romano suggested that we encourage students to write portfolios in multiple voices and genres that revolve around a single subject or concept, just as Michael Ondaatje had done in his novel *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid.* Romano also shared examples of such portfolios from high school students in Ohio.

Since Romano's presentation, I have used portfolios for four years now, and I find them quite effective. Students in the creative writing class produce four portfolios during the semester. Three portfolios center on specific genres: fiction, poetry, and drama. Each of these has specific requirements in terms of the number and type of final works submitted. In addition, each portfolio includes a self- and a peer evaluation, responding to different concerns with each submission. In place of a final examination, each student submits a portfolio based on the ideas of Romano and the writing style of Ondaatje. Each student reads the portfolio to the class before submission, either individually or using classmates to represent the various voices. Then I duplicate each student's final portfolio for the other class members as a momento of their shared experience.

My success with portfolios comes first because each portfolio has a clearly defined purpose: to produce a body of work to be evaluated based on specific writing and course objectives. The three issues implied here—purpose, content, and assessment—are the most important considerations in portfolio use. In fact, portfolios in an educational setting by definition are "collections of student work that are reviewed against criteria in order to judge an individual student or program" (Herman, Aschbacher, & Winters, p. 72). By having a student create this "collection," the teacher must consider what purpose it will serve, what is to be included, and how it will be evaluated.

The first consideration for the portfolio is purpose. Murphy and Smith in *Writing Portfolios: A Bridge from Teaching to Assessment* advocate, "Writing portfolios . . . need a reason to be" (p. 18). Once selected the purpose affects all other aspects of portfolios. Purposes vary according to educational goals and expected student outcomes, and the teacher should be aware that, on occasion, goals, at first seeming compatible, can conflict with each other (pp. 22–25). Still there are many valid purposes portfolios can fulfill. Murphy and Smith indicate that among other things portfolios can "document student growth over time, motivate and empower students, establish or examine the teaching of writing as process, or review student performance periodically" (pp. 17–18). Yancey in "Portfolios in the Writing Classroom: A Final Reflection" thinks portfolios provide students an opportunity to experiment, to collaborate, and to explore feelings about writing (pp. 103–104). While purposes vary, the chosen purpose bears directly on the classroom practices which produce a portfolio's content.

Yancey points out that portfolios bring the teacher power in the classroom. First, teacher control in adopting them is not as important as decisions over their continued use. Second, the content of the portfolio is governed by the classroom content. Third, the reading of portfolios allows for differing purposes, developmental and evaluative. Fourth, other benefits like better staff development and new ways of examining student writing accrue through the decision to use portfolios. The teacher is not the only one to grow once portfolios are introduced in the classroom.

The student also gains power over learning once portfolios are adopted because the teacher's instructional practices must change. Murphy and Smith state that for each student to

experience success with portfolios the teacher must provide time for all language arts activities: reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. The teacher must grant permission for the student to make meaningful choices and to allow the student to take risks or to make mistakes. The teacher must provide for daily interaction among students and between the teacher and student. And, finally, the teacher must also provide support and practice in all aspects of writing (p. 22).

Sound use of portfolios also links instruction and learning. By encouraging divergent thinking and multiple modes of expression, and by emphasizing critical thinking skills, the teacher can help each student construct personal meaning from new information and from prior knowledge. Because learning style, developmental pace, and intelligence vary, portfolio use helps provide choices in tasks and how to show mastery and competence. Portfolios also provide the student with time to think and complete assignments with opportunity to revise and to rethink. When the teacher, the student, and peers work closely through the building of the portfolio, there is a better chance of increased success because the student clearly understands goals and has an opportunity for self-evaluation and peer review. Finally, the student comes to see the connection between learning and performance, hopefully increasing motivation and self-esteem (Herman, Aschbacher, & Winters, pp. 19–20).

I have found success with portfolios for several reasons. Primarily, the paper flow is quite manageable. Helping a student build a portfolio allows me time to conference with that student as difficulty develops and drafts emerge. After the conference, the student has a real reason for revising writing (each student must include the drafts of one of the final works in each portfolio). Because the student submits the portfolio at the end of a writing unit, false starts and writing blocks are not penalized. Classroom time becomes a true workshop with the student sharing drafts in the author's chair and with peer editing partners, with the student reading a variety of models of a specific genre, and with the student selecting the best work for inclusion in the portfolio. A weekly progress sheet from each student helps schedule conferences for those in difficulty so few portfolios ever come in unfinished, and the progress sheet with its checklist response from me assists with classroom management.

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Portfolio use also provides many chances for the student to reflect about the process of writing used in developing the portfolio. Yancey suggests that the many purposes for students to explore their feelings about writing include to nurture self-reflection, to think about writers and writing, to examine total writing production, and to respond to their own writing (p. 104). Others, like Gold (1992), who are interested in a student's metacognitive responses to keeping a portfolio have developed techniques from the simple to the complex, from the direct to the subtle, to facilitate student reaction to the portfolio experience. Gold asks each of her students five questions at the end of each semester: What was the best thing about keeping a portfolio? What were the drawbacks of keeping a portfolio? Did your writing or thinking change by keeping a portfolio? Did your attitude toward writing change? Why? (pp. 25–26). Gold draws several conclusions from her students' responses to these questions. First, students gain a new perspective on their writing. Portfolios also give students choice and allow them to risk failure without a risk to their grades. Portfolios increase the amount of student writing and, when used in conjunction with writing groups, create a wider audience than just the teacher. Finally, students come to appreciate their own progress, assess their own strengths and weaknesses, and set their own goals (pp. 29–30).

The more sophisticated projects like Arts PROPEL, a joint effort of the Pittsburgh Public Schools, the Educational Testing Service, and Harvard's Project Zero, promote student reflection for more "real world" reasons. Arts PROPEL wants students "to become aware of strategies and processes they have used in their writing" and to encourage them "to develop criteria and standards for their work" (Camp, p. 64). Using portfolios does have "real world" benefits for my students as learners and for me as an educator. Students work for a sustained time at one task, they solve problems with their work, and they make value judgments about their work before submission. In addition, I have a chance to act as a sounding board instead of being the font of wisdom in front of the room. As a result, the classroom has become much more interactive. Finally, I now have an alternative method for assessing the merit of a student's effort as well as the quality of the work produced, and the student has had some choice about the work being evaluated.

Just as deciding on a purpose for the portfolio has a direct bearing on pedagogy, the decision of intent has a direct bearing on the portfolio's content. First, someone must decide what work will be included in the portfolio. In some cases, the teacher may decide. In others, the student may decide. Murphy and Smith point out that the emphasis is on decision making, that is, teachers deciding

what they want to accomplish with portfolios and how they will use them. Students, too, make key decisions, such as selecting portfolio entries and reflecting on those entries.

In most cases, the student and the teacher work collaboratively to decide, using clearly defined goals, what will appear in the finished product. The final portfolio might be an accumulation of material from the entire semester or school year, or it might be work culled to illustrate the "best work" from a variety of classroom activities. Regardless of the specific content, the portfolio should be representative of what students can do and should include enough material to demonstrate student performance and to make a judgment about the writer (Murphy & Smith, 1991, p. 33).

Because the content of the portfolio is decided by the student, students need opportunities within the classroom to receive audience feedback to assist in planning and revising. In the classroom, the students and I provide support in several ways: student-teacher conferences, author's chair, and peer writing partners. This peer partner relationship is critical because, as David L. Wallace points out, "Put simply, collaborative planning attempts to help writers elaborate their understanding of their rhetorical context by creating a supportive social context" (p. 48).

Reading portfolios is not the voluminous task one would think. Because I have seen much of the work in progress, I know how the work has evolved and how the writer has solved problems, and the reading progresses much quicker, more like reading to enjoy rather than to edit. Assigning a grade, which has always been difficult for me, provides an opportunity to reward progress as well as the quality of the finished product. Another checklist shared with each student in advance provides the criteria for grading.

In shaping portfolios for assessment, the teacher must remember that "meaningful evaluation of student literacy must itself be a complex, situated description of that learning composed to meet the particular needs of the individuals to whom it is addressed" (Stock, pp. 74–75). Here again the purpose of the portfolio is important for "portfolio assessment allows assessors to decide how the portfolios they will use will be constructed and what functions those portfolios will serve" (p. 75). When shaping the portfolio for assessment, the teacher develops lessons from student writing, uses student writing as the basis for conferencing, examines the learning that takes place, and allows the student to select pieces for development and publishing (p. 75).

Portfolio assessment is taking on larger implications as the move to statewide and national forms of alternative assessment expand. In Pennsylvania under PCRP II, portfolios are cited as a beneficial means to "collect and make periodic and cumulative evaluations of a variety of products" (Lytle, p. 146). The PCRP II program emphasizes portfolios because of the problems common assignments and special prompts raise as a means of large-scale evaluations. With these methods, the process writing strategy is not applicable, topics and genre are limited, different audiences and purposes are not considered, and performance is "influenced by prior knowledge and interest" (p. 146). Portfolio assessment gains additional benefit because it is easy to adapt for writing across the curriculum, and culled work provides for periodic evaluation. In addition, single or selected works from portfolios can be evaluated holistically (pp. 146–47).

Assigning a grade, which has always been difficult for me, provides an opportunity to reward progress as well as the quality of the finished product.

Herman and others suggest that what makes for effective portfolio evaluation, though, is the review of student work against established, published criteria. Such a review judges the individual student or program rather than compares student against student or program against program. In order to assess portfolios three conditions must exist: defined purpose; stated methods for determining content, authorship, and deadlines; and identified criteria. Two central issues related to scoring portfolio assessment are the criteria used in selecting material for inclusion and the criteria used for judging the quality of the samples (p. 72). However, enough models abound for the classroom teacher.

While the Arts PROPEL portfolio assessment was developed for a visual arts program in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, the assessment model can be adapted quite easily for writing evaluation. In this assessment format Wolf and Pistone developed three broad areas: production, reflection, and perception, with each category defined by a set of specific criteria. In production, for example, craftsmanship, understanding, inventiveness, commitment, and expression are the enumerated criteria. Under reflection, evaluators look for the sense of self as artist, critic, and the ability to make use of feedback. Within perception, ability to discern qualities in the work of others, perception of the environment, and cultural awareness are the established measures (p. 52).

Whatever the system for evaluating and assessing student portfolios, Herman warns of concerns the teacher should keep in mind. First, to what degree does the portfolio represent the work the student can do? Second, how much support did the student receive when completing the included work? Third, how well does the portfolio match instructional

goals? Fourth, does the work included require ability beyond instructional targets? Fifth, is the method for review consistent and accurate? (pp. 120–21).

For Murphy and Smith, portfolio assessment is more than finding what is wrong because "portfolios offer the dynamic picture . . . the opportunity to analyze papers along a horizontal line, several papers from the same student collected over time and in a variety of situations" (p. 50). For them the potential of portfolios does not stop there. Murphy and Smith see other vast benefits of portfolio programs. Portfolios are a beginning for connecting the learning, teaching, and assessment triad. Portfolios give the teacher a new role as researcher to determine what goals have been met and what new goals need to be set. Portfolios reinforce the self-evaluation real writers use to examine their work. By building a portfolio, a student becomes thoughtful in analyzing writing. The student also gains ownership over ideas. In addition to integrating assessment and practice, portfolios lend an authenticity to the process. Finally, the authority for teaching and learning belongs to the teacher and the student (pp. 58–59).

All of this has been true for me, too. I have stopped looking for errors in students' creative writing papers, and I have opened up the classroom so that now it has become *our* classroom, not *my* classroom. In addition, portfolios in various forms and styles are finding their way into other classes I teach. That week in San Francisco the summer after a major earthquake has transformed me. I no longer try to teach students to be creative and imaginative; instead my students and I work together to free the voice and ear hidden within each of us. ●

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Six Strategies to Promote Assessment and Innovation

by Jane Brady Matanzo, Florida Atlantic University, Port St. Lucie, Florida

Assessment often is synonymous with the words *evaluation, testing,* and *affirmation.* The term *innovation* often is used synonymously with the words *change, renew,* or *modify.* In any case, innovation implies that a process of change to some degree will take place based on some known information. It seems that these two terms must be melded and result in growth for a classroom, department, or school district as a whole. In other words, as one assesses what is or is not happening instructionally, one should apply the information gained to improving the conditions of the classroom and instruction to foster even more growth among the students and to increase the effectiveness of teachers, department chairs, and administrators.

Before assessment and innovation, most of the curriculum and instruction being implemented in the districts where I worked as a consultant could be characterized as traditional practice. The descriptor *traditional* should not be viewed pejoratively however, simply because some practices can and should be retained and used to ease transitions as other practices change. By "traditional" I refer to the general status of curriculum and instruction in the districts where I've worked relative to what has occurred over a considerable period of time in a majority of these districts. These traditional practices include separated and distinct curricula (literature, grammar, spelling, drama, writing, listening, speaking, handwriting); a scope-and-sequence

skill and content format; widespread teacher lecturing; assigned writings evaluated solely by the teacher; considerable reliance on textbooks with expectations that certain parts of a text be covered by given time intervals; individual competition for grades; isolated and regimented grammar, punctuation, and spelling assignments; leveling; and fragmented and short time allotments for separated topic and skill instruction and activities.

As numerous published research findings and reports of innovative practices and reform reached these districts during the 1980s and early '90s, it seemed appropriate to various levels of personnel to examine what was being done in their respective districts and to entertain brainstormed modifications. After working their way through self-assessment and subsequent change, these districts initiated such innovations as:

- Developing more integrated and inclusive English and language arts curricula;
- Encouraging more self-selection and group response to literature;
- Using multiple texts, nonprint materials, and technological and community resources;
- Involving students more actively during planning, learning, and production possibilities;
- Increasing attention to the integration of listening, oral communication, and drama processes during content learning;
- Integrating the writing process with grammar, punctuation, and spelling instruction;
- Including a range of instructional strategies and graphic organizers to foster comprehension and higher-level thinking opportunities;
- Offering evaluation options which included student, peer, and teacher input as well as portfolio collections and conferences;
- Integrating the language arts and content from other curricular areas through thematic units;
- Establishing cooperative learning groups;
- Grouping students flexibly and for a variety of purposes; and
- Establishing greater blocks of instruction and production time.

The degree and quantity of the assessment and innovation varied for each district depending upon its perceived needs, goals, and scope of change. However, the most important aspect of listing the above examples of innovation realized as a result of assessed findings is to ask what *strategies* did these districts use to help them turn those findings into accomplished change and growth.

Six Innovation Implementation Strategies

Six strategies appeared to have a positive impact on interfacing assessment with changed practice to make an instructional difference. It is not imperative that all strategies discussed be implemented, since some may not reflect the needs or possible application in given schools or districts. However, these strategies require little, if any, funding or additional personnel. They do encourage the empowerment and long-term commitment of the various levels of educators involved. It is the intent that the sharing of these strategies will accomplish two things: to encourage awareness on the part of those planning the assessment of a current program, material, or practice and the implementation of a resulting instructional change of the strategies used by individual schools and/or districts that seemed to make an implementational difference; and to plant a seed of possibilities for additional strategies the readers of this article will generate.

The six strategies are:

Articulation among various implementers affecting assessment and innovation. It is suggested that all those affected be involved, or at least, informed, at every step of the assessment and innovative processes. A crucial factor is to include the active participation of even those persons who may find assessment and change uncomfortable or who believe that neither will make a difference. It is easy to compose a committee of proponents for assessment and change. However, it seems more helpful to have all points of view aired during the brainstorming, inception, planning, and developmental processes. If assessment and innovation are being done at a school level, the principal, teacher leaders or departmental chairs, representative teachers, students at various levels of achievement, and parents should be involved. It is important to note whom the assessment and innovation will affect. In one instance, a schoolwide assessment was to ascertain the degree to which reading and writing was taking place throughout the school day. The findings showed a great irregularity of practice. The resulting innovation was to have reading and writing alerts that required anyone in the school to have reading or writing materials available throughout the school day. At the sound of the given signal, such as an announcement over the intercom, everyone in the school, including guests, would read or write depending on the type of signal sounded. As all personnel in the school would be included, representatives of the janitorial, cafeteria, and secretarial staffs were a part of the initiation. At one school, the involvement of these personnel resulted in their becoming more involved in the students' learning while the students gained a new respect for auxiliary personnel. These personnel also suggested when alert signals would be inappropriate, such as a time when they were involved with more demanding duties which could not be rescheduled. Because of their involvement from the inception of the survey and the "alert" concept, the voluntary participation of auxiliary personnel was high. They were an integral part of the school team.

At a department level, there should

be chair, teacher, parent, and student representation. This does not mean that all representatives need to be present at all meetings. However, it is helpful to get representative opinions and suggestions from all involved prior to beginning the assessment and initiating any change in practice. In one school, student representatives pointed out that they first needed prior instruction before being able to participate in either authentic assessment or innovative implementation effectively. It was assumed they already possessed the required prior knowledge and experience. Their input resulted in the evaluators and implementers revising their timeline and array of tasks. If the assessment or innovation is such that whatever is done could aid personnel in other departments, such as ascertaining students' need for better organization of ideas followed by the implementation of graphic organizers on a regular basis during English and language arts instruction, representatives from those departments should be invited. In one school, this resulted in teachers in other curricular areas also assessing what they were doing and, subsequently, reinforcing and transferring the use of given graphic organizers to their respective content areas. The more individuals included in the assessment, developmental, and approval stages, the smoother the implementation of the innovation will be.

Design and expectations of written framework articulated among grades and course sequences. In various districts where I worked, the initial plan was to implement an innovation based on specific assessment findings at one grade or course level. It seemed wise for the committee to focus narrowly at first, experimenting with the innovation at one grade level or during a given course. Such a focus also verified if the innovation could enhance the assessment findings. However, when the committee took into consideration the students who were learning something new such as the writing process, it appeared to be even wiser to install an overall timeline prior to the initial implementation as to when the innovation would be implemented at other grade or course levels. It seemed particularly effective to be ready to continue the innovation as the students proceeded from level to level. Incremental assessment also was included to see if this process was making the difference needed in writing. Inclusion proceeded until the innovation was implemented in all appropriate grades or course sequences. This inclusion instilled continuity. Also, the teachers and others who were involved in the initial assessment and implementation became advisors and consultants to teachers at the succeeding levels. If an innovation such as the writing process is considered effective in making differences in the teaching, executing, and evaluation of writing, it should be implemented in an appropriate degree throughout all grade levels.

The more individuals included in the assessment, developmental, and approval stages, the smoother the implementation of the innovation will be.

One district, based on a self-appraisal of what already was occurring, decided to do this by even developing a prewriting process that could be implemented in preschool and kindergarten. The crux of this type of development was to have a pre-K–12 committee that articulated what was happening in classrooms prior to the innovation and the perceptions various grade levels had of each other. Elementary, middle school, and high school personnel held both accurate and inaccurate perceptions. Discussions led to how and when that particular instruction was emphasized in the elementary schools of that particular district. Such articulation led to some instructional modifications as well as a natural progression of transferring and reinforcing earlier teachings. A successful strategy used during the planning period was to form subcommittees with representatives from all three school levels. Again, respect abounded, continuity of instruction was more ensured, and a greater understanding of the needs, tasks, and materials used at each level resulted. Modifications made in the curriculum and practice tended to consider more fully the total progression of students and how the innovation would aid in reaching the district's, school's, or teachers' goals.

Teamed training workshops. Assessments linked to practice and subsequent innovation require the training of teachers or other staff members to become cognizant of revised curricula expectations and to learn how to employ new instructional materials or strategies. An effective way to accomplish this training is to have a small corps of teacher volunteers first implement the innovation in their classrooms. One school district established corps which met periodically to compare and assess what was working and what needed to be refined so the schoolwide implementation of the innovation could be more effective. They then brainstormed ways to modify what they were doing and, subsequently, attempted those modifications in their respective classrooms. As their confidence in implementing the innovation grew, members of this corps became resident experts for that innovation based on their own in-class assessments. They planned a series of workshops for other interested and voluntary teachers who wished to implement the proposed innovation in their own classrooms. At least two teachers conducted each workshop so they could work with subgroups and share more than one example of how each best implemented the innovation in their respective classrooms.

The workshop participants, in turn, became additional resident experts for the innovation and joined the corps already able to conduct workshops for new volunteers.

This cycle continued until all significant staff members were trained. It seemed prudent to begin with volunteers rather than make the innovation immediately mandatory for all teachers and students. Word of mouth, authentic examples of classroom assessment for a given district, and examples of the innovation's impact on students' work or teacher effectiveness eventually resulted in the willing acceptance of the innovation by a majority of teachers and administrators.

Peer facilitator assistance. Peer facilitators can provide technical assistance and encouragement in a more personal manner, one customized to a given teacher or classroom. Peer facilitators may be members of the corps or representatives from each school or within a school who have been trained in and are committed to the innovation. In the districts where I've taught, they were mostly part of and believers in the district assessment of a given practice. Initially, it helped if two teachers within the same school were trained so they could gain further confidence and refine their own implementation of the innovation by coaching one another. When these two teachers felt well grounded in the implementation of the innovation, each was paired with other untrained volunteer staff members. A peer facilitator checklist of implementation steps was constructed and used during and after the coaching as a reference. After the new volunteers were trained, they also became peer facilitators. This cycle continued until all relevant staff members were trained and had repeated opportunities to practice implementation. The motto of these systems was to augment growth and change based upon authentic assessment of what was already happening in given classrooms, departments, or schools.

Release time was provided within the school for approximately an hour at selected intervals for peer facilitators. The peer facilitator's class was covered in creative ways in various schools. Some examples of this coverage include the use of in-house personnel such as reading specialists, aides, student teachers, teacher specialists, school-based substitutes, and even the principal in several instances; the scheduling of facilitation when students attended assemblies; and if the teacher had a double planning period, the periodic scheduling of one part of that time for facilitation. The teacher being coached was in the classroom working with his or her own students so no release time was required. Whenever possible, facilitators and those teachers being coached who had the same planning period were paired so they could make contact on a more regular basis, ask each other questions, and brainstorm solutions for any problems encountered.

Pilot proposals and small-scale implementations. It is important that educators at all levels be empowered to initiate innovative ideas and practices. In the districts where I worked, any innovation proposed needed to be based on what was occurring or not occurring in given classrooms, departments, or schools based upon relative self-assessment, workshop attendance, and the increased awareness of professional literature in given curricular areas. As innovations in given areas were introduced, teachers and others questioned aspects of the innovation as well as additional curricular practices. One school district believed that it could embolden teachers and others to the research possibilities they envisioned by having them monitor practices and collect data. This attitude on the part of the district fostered commitment because it recognized that any staff member could be a viable part of the assessment and solution to the problems and needs of the district in English and the language arts. Initiatives were made by individual teachers, teams of teachers, administrators, and specialists. The degree of the ideas proposed varied from districtwide applications to departmental change within one school.

To facilitate the planning of this type of on-site research, a pilot proposal planning form was developed. The purposes of this form were to guide the planning process and to establish a rationale if the proposal required the approval of others. The form requested such information as a description of the proposed pilot; a brief rationale as to why this pilot was important; the timeline, place, implementers, and subjects of the pilot; a description of how the findings would be evaluated, one that often involved a premeasure of some type; and a discussion of how the findings would be reported and disseminated. Approval for any one proposal varied according to whom or what the proposal affected. If the pilot was for district change and involved several classrooms at a number of schools, permission and approval of the planning form often was given by the Board of Education, which was approached by the relevant subject district supervisor. At the conclusion of the pilot, findings were presented to the Board for approval for more widespread use of the practice throughout the district. One experiment in a departmental change only involved the permission and approval of the department chair. If the change proved effective at the conclusion of the pilot and that change would affect school policy, then the department chair and the study's implementers articulated the proposed change to appropriate personnel, such as the building principal, for long-term implementation approval. The most important and visible changes appeared to be that teachers showed increased ownership based on their own assessment of what they were doing or not doing in their classrooms, monitored their students more closely to see if a given practice was effective, and entertained additional

possibilities of ways that given goals and objectives might be met.

Internal English and language arts networks. Once the assessment takes place and the implementation of an innovation begins, teachers and administrators expressed a need for support, encouragement, and feedback. Ways were brainstormed to provide such scaffolding. One school district that was undergoing system-wide change started the *Ideagram*, an English language arts newsletter disseminated quarterly. An organizing committee decided upon a general format. Voluntary staff members from different schools elected to do one given issue over a three-year period of time. The format selected by the committee included a section on "Innovation Status: What's Working"; an S.O.S. column where teachers expressed a need for assistance or a call for materials or other resources that might be shared; listings of newly acquired resources; tips from teachers or others that helped their implementation be successful; a question-and-answer column to which an English language arts supervisor or innovation resident experts responded; and student examples relevant to the innovation. The district office processed the newsletter's printing and dissemination. On the smaller scale of a building or departmental network, a "telegram" format was used to share noted assessment findings such as "Neat Happenings" or "S.O.S. Flares," to give and get input from colleagues. The telegram format was preprinted with each implementer given a pad of blank telegrams to share ideas and successes or request help when it was needed. Asking for help became accepted and not an indication of inadequacy. The particular districts where I worked did not have access to networked computers at that time. However, with increasing access to e-mail and other computerized delivery systems, networking partnerships can now be established within some departments or schools and among schools and districts. It was observed that a positive difference was made when implementers were able to communicate through an established network to share their assessment findings and implementation frustrations and successes. Many new professional partnerships were formed, and in several instances, these connections resulted in the initiation of additional innovations.

Implementing assessment findings and subsequent innovations in English language arts curricula and instruction means instilling change within or apart from current practices.

Implementing assessment findings and subsequent innovations in English language arts curricula and instruction means instilling change within or apart from current practices. Regardless of the nature of the assessment and its related innovation, implementers must hurdle the challenge of change. Some of the challenge can be minimized if people feel that what is being changed is based on authentic assessment that is relevant to what they have been doing. However, with the integration of the given strategies or other strategies initiated by those doing the implementation, a sense of collaboration should prevail. From my observations of individuals, departments, schools, and districts going through both the assessment and innovation implementation processes, the more ownership and support that is perceived, the more any given change based on valid assessment findings will become an accepted and lasting practice. ●

Engaging Reluctant Readers through Shared Poetry Experiences

by Marilyn S. Davis, Oaklawn Elementary School, Derby, Kansas, and Gerry A. Coffman, Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas

Authentic literacy tasks provide opportunities for elementary school children to participate in activities using meaningful sources of literature and writing. Through these experiences, children find enjoyment in reading the works of others and learn that they can communicate through their own writings. Children in today's classrooms are seen crafting their own writing through prewrite discussions and revision teams. However, many of the classroom successes are not documented to share with others who might be interested in developing literacy-centered classrooms. Hiebert (1994) suggests that teachers should be aware of the influences of literacy activities on learning in the classroom, note the successes of the activity, and "reflect, refine, and adapt" (p. 392) for future applications. Given our professional experiences in working with reluctant readers and writers, we were interested in using a poetry unit to determine if this form of literature would promote excitement and motivation in children who had demonstrated a lack of ability and confidence to read and write.

The decision to use poetry was based on several factors. Duthie and Zimet (1992) suggested that poetry is not always available to children, but "can be the genre that excites children and motivates them to read and write" (p. 14). Poems could be selected to provide material short in length and easy to read, with rich language for vocabulary discussions

and sight word study, rhythmic language for readers to hear predictable patterns, and, from an economical standpoint, an inexpensive source of materials.

The methods of instruction are similar to the shared poetry experience described by Wicklund (1989). The elements of this poetry experience are supported in other literature. McCracken and McCracken (1979) recommend that children be immersed in print through chants and writing experiences based on songs and poems. Trelease (1989) notes that less proficient readers can be motivated to read through 15 minutes of read-aloud each day. Lenz (1992) finds that poetry read orally and the subsequent discussions of the images in words helps her first and second graders link oral language to the written word. Duthie and Zimet (1992) find that children enjoyed listening to the repetition of words in poetry, studying shape poems, and then applying these structures in their own poems.

The shared poetry experiences are based on procedures established by Holdaway (1979) for the "Preschool Bedtime Story Learning Cycle." The primary focus of this approach is to have the teacher and children read "big books" together. "Big books" are enlarged versions of a book to allow all children to see the words and illustrations while reading together. The teacher gains the attention and interest of the children by encouraging the listeners to "chime in" and read aloud. The children participate in a discussion and then try to read the books independently. Later, the teacher may provide word identification lessons using the books. The books are left in the classroom for children to self-select for independent reading. Wicklund (1989) suggested that the shared book experiences described by Holdaway be adapted to the needs of less proficient readers by using poetry to provide descriptive language and rhythmic patterns that can be transferred to other speaking and writing activities.

In response to this recommendation, we used poetry for the read-aloud sessions followed by enrichment writing and sight-word building activities. The students selected four sight words from their poem to put on flashcards to practice each day and to use in sentence combining activities at the end of the unit. Original poems and student poems were put on the wall and read aloud at each session.

Background on Project

The poetry unit was designed to be used in a speech and language resource room in a Midwestern elementary school with a student population of approximately 300 children. Students are identified for the speech and language program by parent or teacher referral and through the Early Prevention of School Failure (EPSF) screening given to all kindergarten and low-achieving first graders. If an area of concern is identified, further diagnostic testing is completed and the student may be referred to the speech and language program. The children who attend this program typically work on articulation therapy or language remediation. The skills most often addressed are auditory memory, expressive language, grammar, listening, sequencing, and vocabulary.

We were interested in using a poetry unit to determine if this form of literature would promote excitement and motivation in children who had demonstrated a lack of ability and confidence to read and write.

The students who participated in the poetry unit were referred by the classroom teacher for language assistance and met with Mrs. Davis either individually or in pairs for 20 minutes twice a week. The time limit for each session was not longer given the schedule for the resource room. The participants were two boys, ages 8 and 9, and four girls, ages 6, 7, 8, and 9.

After reading approximately 20 poems to the children during a four-week period, Mrs. Davis concluded that most of the selections were too long or had unknown vocabulary words and concepts which made the poems too complex to present to the children who had language and attention disabilities. Examples of vocabulary that the children did not understand from the original poems included: *My head is spinning, revolving door, behold, lacks, and dines or sups.*

For this unit, we selected short poems which contained concepts familiar to primary-age children. Priority was placed on the selection of poems that would promote high interest through creative words and patterns. The categories of invented words, repetition, number rhyming, shape poems, and jump rope rhymes were represented in the unit. The poems are listed below in order of use with the reasoning for each selection.

Invented Word: "The Birthday Cow" by Eve Merriam.

This poem is based on a familiar song ("Happy Birthday") and talks about an animal and its sound. The original poem begins by wishing the cow a "Happy Mooday to You." The poem was selected to be first in the unit because the students had talked about animals and their sounds during the vocabulary lessons. The invented word would simply be the animal's sound plus day.

Repetition: "Rules" by Karla Kuskin.

This is a humorous poem with entertaining illustrations. The original poem begins with two rules, "Do not jump on ancient uncles" and "Do not yell at average mice." We thought the children would have fun making up their own silly rules by discussing examples from home that were serious or silly. The children followed the pattern of the original poem by writing verses such as "Do not bother Grandpa" and "Do not play with snakes."

Number Rhyming: "Going to School" by Anne English.

This poem includes a first line of four numbers in any order, and a second line with a last word that rhymes with the last number in the first line. We thought that it would be easy for the children to think of words to rhyme with the number words.

Shape Poems: "Rain" and "Thin Man" both by Peter Thabit James; "Roller Coaster" by William Fellows.

Shape poems provide a multisensory experience by having the children think of words and then draw. Emphasis was given to the shapes, ideas, and independent writing, rather than rhyming.

Invented Word: "Guzzlesnumps" by Barbara Schmidt.

This poem is in riddle form with the children guessing what "Guzzlesnumps" could be in real life. We thought the children would enjoy thinking of their own nonsense word and writing a short verse about the word.

Jump Rope Rhyme: "Cinderella" by Joanna Cole.

Jump rope rhyme poems give children the opportunity to choose their own character and create a poem. We thought the children would enjoy using the original poem as a model, substituting their own character, color, action idea, and "How many. . ." question.

Presentation of Unit

Throughout the unit, shared poetry experiences (Wicklund, 1989) were used to determine if poetry would encourage the students to read aloud and to express their ideas orally and in writing. In preparation for the unit, the poems were printed on large sheets of paper backed with construction paper and a smaller copy was prepared for each child. The following two lessons were selected to show how a poem was presented to the student.

Lesson One

The first poem presented in the unit was "The Birthday Cow" by Eve Merriam. Mrs. Davis began by asking a series of prereading questions to generate the students' understanding of the original birthday song. She asked, "What song do we sing to people on their birthday?" The children answered, "Happy Birthday," and they sang the song together. The children were asked, "How would a cow sing the song?" A prompting question was asked, "What do cows say?" The children answered, "Moo." Mrs. Davis read the poem aloud while pointing to the words and the children followed along by reading the poem orally. The writing step began by asking the children to think of an animal they would like to sing to at a birthday celebration. Following the structure of the original poem, the children suggested writing the song for a dog, a mouse, a cat, and a pig. Each child thought of an invented word (e.g., woofday, squeakday, meowday, oinkday) to go with their animal. They either wrote the words or dictated to Mrs. Davis and then illustrated their poem. The poems were displayed on the wall under the heading "Invented Words" with a statement about the shared poetry experience. To provide repeated reading practice, each time the students came to the room they read the poems from the wall. For sight word practice, the children selected four words from their poem and wrote them on index cards. After writing the words, each student read the words again to the teacher. After each subsequent poem, four more words were selected, and all words were read again by the student.

Lesson Five

The shape poems were used in the fifth shared poetry experience. The poems presented were "Rain," "Thin Man," and "Roller Coaster." Mrs. Davis read each poem without using any prereading questions. The students discussed the shape of each poem and why the words were written in a shape. After reading "Rain," Mrs. Davis asked, "Why does this look like rain coming down?" One child said, "Because each letter looks like a raindrop." The teacher asked, "Why does this look like an umbrella?" The children responded by pointing out that the letters were put together in the shape of an umbrella. Discussion followed using the "Roller Coaster" and "Thin Man" poems. The children were instructed to draw their own shapes after the teacher provided examples such as steps, mountains, circles, and playground equipment. After the students decided on a shape, discussion followed about words to describe the shape. The children experimented with drawing the shape on scratch paper. After the shape was drawn, the teacher and children brainstormed words that would describe the shape. The children all chose to write the words on their shape without dictating to the teacher. In the last step, the children were introduced to the concept of creating a title for their work. A title was added to each shape poem. As in the previous lessons, four words were chosen by the child for the sight word practice.

At the end of the unit, Mrs. Davis made individual books for each child to take home which included their own poems and the poems of one other student. Since the children had seen all of the poems on the wall for four months, they were familiar with them, and were happy to see a friend's writing included in their booklet. To continue practicing sight words, the word cards were placed on the table and the students practiced sentence order by sequencing the cards and writing possible sentences using the words. This activity provided additional practice with the sight words and with writing.

Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this project was to determine if the use of poetry would motivate reluctant readers and writers to read and write. We found the observations and anecdotal records written in a notebook by Mrs. Davis to provide evidence of student growth. Through these records, we were able to monitor student interest and performance during the poems.

Previously in the language program, Mrs. Davis read poems to the

children without the application of reading and writing activities. This exposure to poetry provided the children with a foundation for the unit without the need to introduce a new type of literature. Also, the experimentation with different types of poetry helped us to look for certain characteristics when selecting poems. Because the children were asked to read aloud, they became more confident as readers and were able to read with greater fluency. We felt placing the poems on the wall and encouraging the children to reread at the beginning of each session provided valuable oral reading practice.

The poetry activities provided language-rich discussions, productive writing activities, and repeated oral reading practice in fun and meaningful ways.

As the lessons progressed, the children were willing to write poems on their own. At the beginning of the unit, none of the children wanted to write. They were willing to dictate to the teacher, and those who later attempted to write were hesitant to use invented spellings. We found the pattern and structure of the base poem to provide a framework for the children to follow as beginning poets. In an interview with Nancy Larrick (1989), Bill Martin Jr. stated "the young reader learns from the beginning to focus on clusters of words which sing together and give meaning together" (p. 493). The children in our classroom were found to experiment with meaningful language both as readers and writers.

After reflecting on the unit, we offer the following recommendations for implementing shared poetry experiences. First, in a classroom situation, the children should be in either small groups or a whole-class group to promote greater discussion. Second, the length of the two sessions each week should be expanded from 20 to 40 minutes. Third, we recommend the teacher include a measure of student interest after the activities are completed for each poem. For example, ask the children how they felt about the poem and to respond by circling a happy, medium, or sad face. Lastly, to increase the amount of oral reading practice, we suggest sending a copy of the poem home with the children. The poem should have a note attached which states, "Please read this poem with your child." Also, the teacher might tape record or videotape the first and final readings of the poems to provide verification of oral reading improvement.

The children participating in the shared poetry experiences demonstrated greater confidence in their abilities as readers and writers at the end of the unit. The poetry activities provided language-rich discussions, productive writing activities, and repeated oral reading practice in fun and meaningful ways. The greatest support for continuing this project in Mrs. Davis's classroom came when the proud poets left as successful beginning readers and writers taking their individual books of poems to share with others. ●

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1995 CEL Election Results

At its annual meeting during the NCTE Annual Convention, held this year in San Diego, the Conference on English Leadership elected two new Members-at-Large: Victor Jaccarino of Herricks Schools, New Hyde Park, New York, and Wanda Porter of Kamehameha Secondary School, Honolulu, Hawaii. Both individuals will serve three-year terms.

In other business, John Barber of Fairmount-Harford High School, Baltimore, Maryland, was named Program Chair for the 1997 CEL conference, to be held in Detroit. ●

Call for Manuscripts—Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly,* a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500–5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

Recent surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

May 1996 (January 31 deadline)
Connections: The Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment Link

October 1996 (June 15 deadline)
Humor and Laughter

December 1996 (August 15 deadline)
Leadership and Academic Freedom

Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Henry Kiernan, Editor, *English Leadership Quarterly,* West Morris Regional High School District, Administration Building, Four Bridges Road, Chester, NJ 07930; phone 908-879-6404, ext. 278; fax 908-879-8861; e-mail <kiernan@planet.net>. ●

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